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THE  
HUGUENOT FAMILY.

*VOL. III.*



THE  
HUGUENOT FAMILY.

BY  
SARAH TYTLER

AUTHOR OF  
"CITOYENNE JACQUELINE,"  
&c., &c.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

VOL. III.

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THE

## HUGUENOT FAMILY.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *The Demolition of a Chaise and a Plot.*

“A! Ma'mselle, don't you see Mr. George is only playing a prank?” protested Milly Rolle, as she crossed her arms, leant back in the chariot, and took the matter very coolly.

“It is no pleasantry to me,” pled Yolande. “Arrest the horses, Monsieur; let us go. It is necessary that I return to Grand'mère within the hour; she will not sit down to the little supper without me. I do not comprehend how you can take us away in this manner, *malgré nous*. But I ask you, as a great favour, that you put me down this

moment, and I shall walk home without difficulty."

"I am vastly sorry to refuse you a favour," professed Mr. George, with a great show of courtesy; "'pon my honour I am; but you see I have been at the trouble to contrive and carry out this adventure in order to get better acquainted with so charming a mademoiselle as you are, and with my kinswoman Miss Milly. I should lose my end entirely if I gave in to your polite request. So come now, little Dupuy, ask any other favour, and, by George, you shall have it, even to my whole stock of *tabac d'étrennes* and orange-flower bouquet, were it only to prove how gallant I can be when I have the opportunity. At the same time consider how I have flattered you two young ladies, for I tell you a false step in this affair may land me in Newgate; therefore I pray you propose to your humble servant something more reasonable."

"Oh, fie! you naughty man, to speak of yourself and Newgate in the same breath," said Milly, fanning away the idea with her

pocket-handkerchief, for she had made immense progress in the art of fashionable conversation and its attendant airs.

“I am as serious as a parson, Madam,” answered Mr. George, carelessly; “can’t you see I’m dressed for a fight?”

Mr. George was aware that there was some risk in his being caught sight of, besides that of his amusement being suspected and interfered with, at a little distance from home; and that he might have a chance of being confounded with some of the wild officers of the period he wore a suit in which he only appeared on special occasions in the country—a militia uniform of red, with buff vest and gold buttons. These so dazzled the eyes of silly, susceptible Milly Rolle, that she fancied she could go to the world’s end and share danger and adversity with so splendid a gentleman, who was at the same time so elegant and pleasant. He was like her poor dear brother Philip in his regimentals, only Philip was solid and tiresomely in earnest for so young a man, and, though fond of his sisters, was given to contradicting them flatly.

And Mr. George was a mighty different man from poor papa in his rusty gown and cassock and old-fashioned bands. Still her papa would miss her when he came back from the assize, were it only in the way of catching up her words and—not snarling at them, her papa was too clever and good to snarl—taking her off and looking down on her intellectually, as Milly had quite wit enough to see that he did. Indeed she did not love the disparaging treatment even when the Rector played most condescendingly with his lasses, and dealt out the lordliest indulgence to them.

“If your Newgate is for the men who lie in wait for the poor, and spread the net for the simple ones——” Yolande began, swelling with the generous scorn which combated craven fear; but Milly interrupted her by bouncing up and putting her plump hand on her mouth.

“How can you go into such a huff and be so saucy to Mr. George, Ma’m selle? Do make allowance for her, sir; it must be her French breeding which renders her so

shy and savage, as she laughs and declares she is, when the black dog is not on her back," explained Milly in something like artlessness. "Now, little Dupuy, come down from your high horse, and don't look at me as if you would take a bite of me: it ain't no use. Why, I've known all along," she continued, triumphantly, "Mr. George had it in his head to give us a bit of pleasure, in the only way he could with all our folks so strait-laced and tyrannical over us. I can tell you I've had my work to decoy you abroad to such a safe distance as to enable this gentleman to put his purpose into execution. Many a time I've had to say 'Plague take that granny of yours, who was always in the way.'" In this fashion giddy, deluded, incorrigible Milly gloried in what should have been her shame.

Yolande lost every particle of her fitful bloom, and paled to a stonier grey than ever, with her mobile mouth set hard, though perhaps she cried as she had not yet cried in the fast falling shadows. Some natures break down more surely at the falsehood and in-

gratitude of a friend than at any personal danger and suffering.

Yolande would not continue a struggle which was useless from the moment she was lifted into the carriage. Happily for the Honourable George and his gentility, it was not necessary to put the mufflers which had been provided for her hands and mouth into requisition. She sat in the gathering darkness, giving no farther token, though her consciousness of her position was morbidly keen. The approaching night, the increasing distance from Sedge Pond, the treachery and absence of trustworthiness in Milly Rolle, the insolent audacity and defiance of her will by Mr. George, came over her strongly. She dared not trust herself to think, lest she should break down, for no Huguenot girl could bear the thought of being overcome by tribulation. She could not allow herself to conjure up the amazement and consternation which her absence would excite in the isolated *émigré* household at the Shottery Cottage, or what she believed would be Grand'-mère's piteous patience, and the sore check

the old woman would put upon herself, that she in her age might sustain and minister to the middle-aged man and woman, who remained her children still as much as young Yolande. She knitted her soft brows, pressed her tender lips together, and clenched her weak hands, to keep herself from wasting her small strength in a fruitless outcry against the violence which had been done to her. After all, it was something to be a Huguenot even in a strait quite removed from the old Huguenot trials. Just as Madame was reminding Grand'mère, in the desolated domesticity of the Shuttery Cottage, that it was not for nothing the Huguenot women had endured unspeakable indignities and burning wrongs in the *aïgues-mortes* and the convents, Yolande was reasoning with herself whether she was so degenerate a daughter of her people that she could not take up her share of the universal trouble, however panic-stricken and mortifying her peculiar experience. Was the God of the noble old Huguenot women too lofty and far-off to deign to heed a poor girl's distress, in the imminent risk of her good name?

In the meantime Mr. George was beguiling the time by taking snuff out of the Duchesse-de-Longueville box which poor, unsuspecting Grand'mère had admired. As he did so he chattered to Milly Rolle, and introduced into the chatter all sorts of languid, frivolous baits and lures to reconcile Yolande to her fate. He promised the girls the sight of a provincial Ranelagh, under the vague protection of other ladies of his acquaintance,—a hint sufficient to make Milly jump with joy and cry breathlessly, “Oh, sir, will there be Chinese lanterns, such as one hears of in town? Will there be boats to sail and sing in without the fear of being drowned? Alleys to run away and dance in with any fine partner who offers? And real boxes where one may sit with one's party; drink real tea, munch real cakes, and quiz all the other boxfuls? Oh, you ninny, Ma'mselle, why ain't you delighted?”

But Yolande was only the more affronted and indignant, “To think that I would be pleased with such things—the coloured

glass, the cakes, the *monde* as wicked as this cruel man, with his smooth, smiling face, which is hard like a rock, while my father and my mother are in despair, and Grand'mère crying out sorrowfully for me? My heart, what do they take me for? Dream they that I shall be kept still as a *sabot* by the talk of floods, bull-dogs at farms, or herds of cattle going to market? I am a *poltronne*, but not *comme ça*. On the contrary, I shall watch like a mouse till I can gnaw and creep through all these obstacles, and not for a quarter of an hour, but a quarter of a year, though I wade, swim even, and hazard being worried and gored by horned cattle the whole way home. But, behold, it is all over with *him* and his family, all over! But when was it ever begun, save in the *mode Française*, which he found detestable, thou silly, slighted, dragged - through - the - mire Yolande? Still I was worthy of him in a sense before, now I am unworthy of him or any man. The dear Grand'mère may essay to console as she will, she cannot undo this

day's work ; and she has told me already that the French girls are never seen or heard of out of their families and those of their *intimes* till they are married and under the protection of their husbands, because a word, a breath of scandal, a letter or a rendezvous, sullies a young girl beyond an honest man's count. *Tout beau !* what would they think of a *fuite* like this."

Mr George's chariot, with its four long-tailed Castle bred, was struggling along a frightful by-road, where no four horses except those to the manner born could have kept to their traces. They made so little progress, however, that their master took the precaution of sending on all his spare fellows before to bespeak refreshments and accommodation for the party at the first inn they should come to. "I cannot trust these rascals," represented Mr. George, "and to sup on a raw rasher and sleep in a damp bed would be the death of me for certain ; and though you, little Dupuy, with your flinty heart, would not mind that, I have an objection to having it recorded, 'Here

lies George Rolle, dead of vile cookery and a shocking catarrh caught in the service of women who were ungrateful to the unlucky dog."

"Dear! dear! Mr. George!" deprecated Milly, in a genuine flutter; "what tempts you to speak so of Newgate, and tombstones, and such-like dismals, in connection with yourself? It is as bad an omen as having one's chamber-candle guttering into death-spools. I declare if you do not make an end of it you will give me the shivers."

"No need on the present occasion," said Mr. George, treating her concern for him cavalierly, as he crossed his booted leg and pointed his toe, "since Harry the rogue can dress a kidney, and make a bed when he chooses, with any Moll cook or Nancy still-maid of the lot."

Milly ventured to pursue the agreeable associations thus suggested, by inquiring, with interest, if Master Harry could do anything to friars'-chicken or cherry-pie, which she must own were her tid-bits. Mr. George vouched with unblushing confidence for

Harry's compounding both on the spur of the moment, and Milly rewarded her grand, all-powerful cousin for his ready attention to her wishes, by bridling still more, and disclosing that the night air was giving her such a prodigious appetite that she seemed to palate the dainties already.

“And what will *you* have, my dear Mademoiselle? Now don't look so contemptuous, since you have not supped. I beg and implore that you will not turn your shoulder to me and stare out of the opposite window there. It is not becoming, it is not genteel, it is not pretty, little Dupuy.” So Mr. George persecuted the object of his vagrant affections, and pressed his flagrant suit. “I have an immense deal more experience than you, as to how young women should behave. I have made it my study; and granted that a coquette who piques a gentleman into opening his eyes is something, yet the style will only work if the creature is of the first water; and a man soon gets sick of contradiction and defiance when a reasonable amount of complacency would attach him for life—for a

year and a day at least. Think of it in time. Take an example by Cousin Milly, and deign to indicate to your slave what you might prefer by way of gross material food and drink during the indefinite period between the hour of noonday, when you last took dinner, and that in which it will be possible for him to live without the adorable company of his two witches."

"That must be main soon," put in Milly, smartly, notwithstanding the dubious condemnation of coquetry, "else my papa and mamma will never forgive me this frolic, though it is so mortal dull at the Rectory when your family, sir, is not at the Castle. I believe the old people think that Doll and me should be content to play all our lives with daisies, kittens, and Black Jasper, as we did when we were children."

"I have not the roc's egg," admitted Mr. George, candidly, maintaining his cross fire; "but if little Dupuy will only oblige me by stating her wishes, however nice they are, and however hard she is to please, if they are attainable by a man doubly, madly en-

amoured, I engage they shall be fulfilled."

"Ma'mselle, do you hear Cousin Rolle?" remonstrated the provoked Milly, "Do what Cousin Rollé bids you, or I'll not be fit to hold my hands from boxing your ears."

The aggrieved, insulted Yolande, thus turned upon by one who had been her friend, had nothing to say to her, but to him—"Monsieur, I want only bread and water to keep me from dying of hunger and thirst. And I do not want it too much, for if I die, I die—that is not much to a Huguenot; we are used to it, the dying under persecution,—indeed, we have called it glorifying God when He asked it of us in the times past; and I suppose He asks it besides of all his poor ones with bent heads and broken hearts. If you do not kill me, I return to Grand'mère over deep seas or roads strewn with flints."

"Farce, my child," Mr George negatived, from such a tremendous height of conceit and patronage, that to have brought him to a sense of his base, unmanly trifling would have been as much as to perform a miracle. "Such doings, monstrous uncomfortable

ones, went out with King Arthur, if they ever were in. Did you ever hear of demoiselle or grisette turning up now-a-days, on the back of an abduction, in the guise of a beggar-maid? I should think not. If you ever show your divine face again in such a wretched hole as Sedge Pond, which was altogether unfit for you, I lay a bet of my last hundred, and Mistress Milly here will be umpire, that it will be seen riding in a coach no worse than this one, though it is just possible my venerable old friend may forget how well De Seigné was broken in to behave on such occasions, and refuse, like a mean, old, cross patch, to receive you."

"Is it that God receives as well as avenges?" said Yolande, sticking to her point, with her great steadfast grey eyes, so different from Milly's twinkling hazel ones. "I do not ask Him to avenge me. I leave his vengeance to himself, according to his word. But as God is perfect, Grand'mère will try to be perfect. I laugh at disgracing Grand'mère. Can you stain the lily, Monsieur, or soil the moon, though the hands with which

you do your *devoir* are as ink, and the clouds as pitch? For me, you cannot carry me out of God's sight and reach; with all your boldness, you do not mean ~~that~~. If I am to glorify Him by suffering, as my people have done, He will permit me to die, or teach me to live. Ah! with Him darkness is light and death is life, and so I rest your *serviteur*, Monsieur."

"Mr. George," remonstrated Milly, vehemently, "I wonder you have so much to say with Ma'mselle; I wonder you go on discording with her. I am avised she is an out-and-out Methody of the French stamp. Did you ever hear such a naughty girl, to say all these good Bible words, as if this was Sunday, and she were composing one of my papa's imposing homilies? To apply them to herself too, in such a trumpery affair as being run away with by an over-gallant gentleman, which I'll go bound she would have given her ears to have been long since. She daunts me. I have to poke my fingers into my ears, for I can't abide to hear a slut of a woman preaching, like Satan reproving

sin, no more than my mother could listen to a sermon, once delivered, pity on us ! by Madame Gage of the Mall. Have done with your rhapsodising and your quoting of the Bible, Ma'mselle ; you forget that I'm a clergyman's daughter. Be more modest, for, in spite of all our regard and confabs, I must tell you plainly that I'm black ashamed of you."

But Milly got something else to daunt her very soon. The October night had drawn its white moist veil, scented with the subtle, melancholy perfume of decaying vegetation, over the earth, close enough to mask faces of misery, and every act and actor which called on the light of day to expose them. What of the wind and water-mills which had at first shown distinct in the dense red gold of sunset was blotted out along with the millers' houses, for which Yolande searched vigilantly, as well as for the square-necked, sloping-shouldered red churches and hamlets which burst out impetuously here and there like the attempts at riot and rebellion with which the politi-

cal world was primed. But these were always at too great a distance for a scream to reach. Miller, or bell-ringer, or busy motherly woman, carrying water from the draw-well for her goodman's supper, or, taking advantage of the last light of day, sitting on the door-step working with the bobbins or the straw which won bread for her bairns, were alike beyond Yolande's reach. It was very likely neither gaffer nor gammer would have been so disinterested, or so much at leisure, as to have paid respect of the kind desired, to a faint, stifled scream issuing from a muddy chariot. One or other would rather have gaped, told himself or herself, in abject admiration, "that be a charyot and fower," and then taken refuge in the cautious, self-satisfied reflection, "folk mun mind their own business, and let their neighbours fight theirs out for theirsens. But mappen the gentry be none the better agreed, or the freer from trouble, than the bondagers. In troth, that squeal sounded as if yon were some poor body going a road with main ill-will."

As it was, Mr. George had no call to use the muffler, and it served him for a trifle to toy with, as a mad doctor trifles with a strait waistcoat so long as the patient, at whom he is glancing out of the corner of his eye, is not refractory and furious. And the notable thing, in either case, would be that Yolande, or the patient, would remain perfectly quiet and demure as cats, while it would be Mr. George, or the mad doctor, who would be guilty of unrebuked and unsuspected folly, of all sorts of antics with the muffler and the waistcoat,—hanging it over their heads or round their shoulders, or dressing their fingers in it like a company of puppets.

The carriage lights with which Mr. George ought to have been provided had been neglected. The hunter's moon threw only such a struggling, fitful light between banks of clouds as caused single farm-houses and detached cottages, seen by its dim, chill beams, to look awfully lonely and miserably poverty-stricken. The deep ruts in the heavy loam of the by-road, now no longer visible to the coachman, made the horses flounder

in their toil, and the chariot to rock ominously, like a ship on a stormy sea, every moment driven more and more among the breakers.

It was in vain that Mr. George stuck his head out of the window and delivered angry commands and counter-commands, accompanied by mouthfuls of blasphemous oaths, and a feint of drawing his walking sword and "pinking," or murdering the driver, as the only natural and justifiable mode of dealing with a difficulty and the servant who could not cope with it.

The levity of Mistress Milly's chatter was jolted out of her. She became white about the rosy gills, and began to add to the din by screaming as piercingly as she had screamed when the hostile mob threatened my lady's carriage in the market-place of Reedham, and by flinging herself frantically from side to side, and clinging desperately now to Yolande's shoulder, now to Mr. George's.

"Monsieur," said Yolande, her voice clear and audible in its liquid foreign articu-

ation, and sounding like the sudden peal of a little bell, "is there the semblance of an overthrow?"

"You have hit the mark exactly, Mademoiselle. And how does such a heroine as you are like danger when it is near?" said Mr. George, who had all the coolness to make the investigation with a sneer.

"I don't like it," answered Yolande, quite truthfully; "nevertheless, I believe Grand'mère prays for us, and I am sure her prayers will be heard before your curses. But, Monsieur, the poor, trembling, tired beasts are over-driven, and thus they stumble at every step."

"Hang me, but, raving devotee of a Mademoiselle though you be, you are right," acknowledged Mr. George, not a coward on his own account, and not so great a fool as to refuse to admit and correct a mistake when it was pointed out to him—a mistake, too, which his knowledge of horseflesh, about equal to that of *vertu*, would have prevented had it not been for what he inherited of his mother's insanely impatient and imperious

temper, which had been excited by opposition, and ruffled beforehand by the encounter he had undergone with what struck him as the superhuman courage and constancy of the French girl.

But before Mr. George's fume could abate sufficiently to allow him to arrest the reckless spurring and whipping of the horses, with a last lurch, a wilder scream from Milly, a more frightful imprecation from Mr. George, and a half-breathed murmur from Yolande, the chariot toppled over with a stunning impetus and a shiver of glass. There was a snort of horses' breath, a rattle of horses' feet, and the chariot lay right across the road, hanging into the ditch which bordered it. Happily for the occupants of the carriage the tormented, terrified horses broke the traces with one bound, struggled to their feet, those of them that could still muster strength for flight, and scampered off, clattering and plunging along the rough road, while those that were dead beat stood and shook at a few yards distance.

Mr. George was no coward, as has been

said, neither was an overturn so rare and improbable an incident in his annals that he had no precedent in his experience, no resources for the occasion. But though he was not left insensible by the accident, he was so far bruised and disabled, and so hemmed in by the cracked and split framework of the chariot, that he was unable to extricate himself, far less to aid others. The situation once proved, he accepted it with *sang-froid*, made an effort to reach his snuff-box, and not being able to attain that *ultimatum*, leant his elbows in their splendid militia uniform on the panel which imprisoned him, and contemplated the wreck around with as much ease as he could command.

Mistress Milly Rolle was not killed, or nearly killed, though she was crying with all her might that she was. It was self-evident that no one could be half killed and make the row Mistress Milly was making, not only in wagging her tongue, but in beating with her feet on the boards, and pushing with her hands in all directions, though she made no attempt to rise.

Mr. George was not so sure of Mademoiselle. As far as he could distinguish, while he peered through the darkness, she was stretched without motion for a minute or two, and his callous heart gave a throb of remorse; then she stirred, slowly at first, more rapidly afterwards, until soon she got up, as if nothing had happened, and ran to Milly.

“Art thou much hurt, Milly? Where is the pain? Raise thyself up, lean on me. Softly, softly, my friend, else the nerves will become masters, and they are horrible tyrants, the nerves.”

All the honest indignation against the unutterable reproach of Milly was gone from Yolande's voice, and instead there was the pity of a strong angel for a weak girl.

But Milly Rolle declined Yolande's overtures rudely, and with a querulous and disconsolate wail.

“Go away, Ma'mselle; you are at the bottom of this mischief. Mr. George would not have moved in it, had it not been to get the better of your prudery and nonsense,

and my death will be at your door. Oh! indeed, do you think I would let a chit like you put a finger on me—and every bone of me broken already—to finish my business entirely. Alake! my papa, why are you not here, to call people to account for the scrape they have got me into? My mamma, why do you not come to take care of your poor girl?”

“Mistress Milly,” Mr. George startled the girls by saying, as quietly as if they were all seated at the Castle supper-table. When they looked round, and tried to discover him, a struggling moonbeam gave them a glimpse of his smooth sallow face, rendered grotesquely horrible by a huge splash of mud on it, and by his scratch wig having been displaced in the shock, so that his head looked like a lunatic’s in his primitive bareness, as it nodded to them with imperturbable good-breeding over the broken panel—  
“Mistress Milly, I beg you to have some mercy on your own lungs, cousin, if not on our ears, and those of the owls and the bats; the tympanums of the latter may re-

cover, but I implore you to consider that it is the former which will be the greatest sufferers in this *contretemps*, if you persist in exerting them to so tremendous an extent. My good creature, be reasonable; we are all in the same mess; and though little Dupuy seems provided with wings for this and every other catastrophe, I, for my part, have come off but poorly. Allow me to mention that I have had the small misfortune to lose an eye. I am convinced that one of my eyes has been knocked out in rough contact with this detestable pale," asserted the Honourable George, affording a wonderful example of philosophy in his own person, as he put up his hand with simple ruefulness, and touched a cold wet mass in the socket of his eye.

Yolande ran to him at that word. "Can I do anything for you, Monsieur? Can I bind up the wound? We have had the art of stanching wounds since Bernarde Romilly stanchèd the wounds of the great Condé. Allow me to extricate you from the barricade."

Monsieur stared fixedly at that proposal. The girl, who had held him at arm's length, and contrived to discomfit him when he had her at his mercy, now, when there had been what the Methodists would have called a signal interposition of Providence in her behalf, neither triumphed in his downfall, nor left him to his fate, nor seized the opportunity to run away to the Grand'mère she thought so much of. She bent over him with a charity which knew no bounds, suggesting the new idea to a man of his calibre that one of the creatures of women, whom he made at the best his poor playthings and at the worst his abominable tools, might have a devotedness which soared above his stoicism in the season of calamity, and was able to afford him support and succour instead of requiring it from him. "I thank you humbly, Madam; I am afraid it is beyond your power to liberate me," said Mr. George, with more sincere respect than he had yet addressed Yolande, or possibly any woman, in the whole course of his existence, not excepting my lady his mother. "Some

hob-nailed lout of a ploughboy, or carter, I make no question, will come up soon ; or my fellows, tired of waiting for us, will have the grace to return and scour the road for our bones any time between this and Christmas." However, he submitted with something like meekness to Yolande's attempt to examine his eye, to see whether his hasty conclusion was correct. And he did not fly out in a rage and decline to entertain her correction of his statement in the announcement that the eye was there, apple and all, and that he must have mistaken for a much more serious and irretrievable misfortune the sudden darkening and smarting produced by the bath of mud in his face. When it was carefully and tenderly wiped away—and Mademoiselle was wiping it with her own *foulard*—the blessing of full vision would be restored unimpaired.

"I crave your pardon, Mademoiselle," Mr. George exclaimed quickly, and still more gravely and earnestly, "for having spread so exaggerated a report of my own misadventure, and making myself out in as bad a

pickle as Miss Milly will have herself to be in. I trust you don't credit me an out-and-out dastard for my silly error. Stay," continued Mr. George, recovering himself from his momentary vexation, "I think it must be my rascal of a coachman, who took the liberty of putting us down in this uncere- monious style, who is beginning to groan so dismally on t'other side of me that, zounds! I suspect it must have been he who has been killed all along, and not my cousin Milly and me."

"It was terribly like it. The coachman who had brought Mr. George's expedition to grief in the first stage, had come to great grief himself, and was the person who was making the least sign. Yolande found him sobbing his breath away from a mortal stroke in the chest. And when she had propped him up and procured water in his cocked hat from the ditch to bathe his drooping head and moisten his dry lips, he spoke to her with that awful, unerring in- stinct of quietness which waits on the height of bodily and mental anguish :

“I be done for in the last of our bad jobs. My breast-bone be stove in. The beastses as I drove so long, and as I cut, *faix!* over deep the night, have turned on me and done it. Yes, there’s the wife as ought to be thought on, spoke about, purwided for, ’cause there’s no good flopping and thinking of kingdom-come at this time of the night. Pearson’s kingdom-comes none for the likes of me, and there’s ne’er a Methody to be found by the side of a road, to flop with one, even if their kingdom would have a gift at the last gasp of a battered rip of a Castle coachman—not my lady’s head coachman, only a under, and ’pointed to serve Lord Rolle and Mr. George’s pleasure.”

Yolande hurried back to where Mr. George was, by comparison, lightly crippled. “Milord,” she told him, tripping in her eager speech, “your domestic is, without doubt, a dying man. I have seen death, though I am only a girl, and I know the meagre face. Milord, Monsieur, though you cannot rise, and I cannot pull you out, if you turn your head and lean on your elbow, you will see

the domestic, and can say what you may, to enlighten and sustain him. He has a poor wife, and she is at the heart of him; he looks for the first time to the other world, to which he is going with long strides. Have I need to say there is not a moment to be lost?"

Mr. George shrugged his shoulders and waved his hand decidedly, declining the commission. "Assure the poor wretch that I commiserate him, if that will do him any good; and tell him that I shall count myself bound to look after his wife, although probably he knows as well as I do where I am to get a penny to put into her purse, and how much good being looked after by a man like me will do her. Let that be. For the rest I keep no account with the Church, it is out of my line. I am fain to add, Mademoiselle, that though I do not fear death in this sorry carcase of mine, I have no taste for looking it in the face when other people, with whom I am by no means connected, are concerned. I never can make out what sends some of us poking

at corpses lying in state, or prowling round coffins mouldering in vaults. Bah! the spectacle is not only an impolite reminder, but a disagreeable reality, and breeds disagreeable dreams. My gospel is to turn my back, when consistent with honour, on whatever is disagreeable, doleful, and nasty. 'Pon my word, I reckon it a bounden duty. Go and preach to the miserable sinner so long as his breath and yours last, my Mademoiselle, but be pleased to hold me excused from the service."

Yolande was foiled, and in her perplexity cast a thought on Milly, since Milly's very ungovernable paroxysm of lamentation and scolding had become hushed before that one strange word of death. Milly had gathered herself up and was crouching, sick and shuddering, in the shelter of the bank. "Milly, I had forgotten, you are the daughter of a good pastor and the sister of Captain Philip, who drew his last sigh on a battle-field. Will you say a prayer of your church, which he knows and can follow, to the dying man, while I take his head on my lap, that he

may die more easily. There is no black thrush in his mouth and throat, there can be no infection here save that of mortality."

"How could you be so hardened as to propose such a shocking thing, Ma'mselle?" cried Milly Rolle, rousing herself to a vehement refusal, "when Mr. George himself cannot look on the sorry sight of his servant dying a violent death? Me, who have never set eyes on a dead man! And it is so bad to begin now in a dark night, by a road side, that if I do not wink with all my might, and duck my head to keep out all sight and sound, I shall go stark staring mad before morning; I know I shall. I am not in orders that I should dare to read church prayers: none but a Methody would make so bold. As to your twitting me with poor Brother Philip's death in a wood or a marsh instead of in his bed, I can only say it is monstrous unkind of you, and I cannot tell what you mean by it."

"I mean no harm," Yolande maintained sadly, "and the sight is not so bad as you and Monsieur think—Oh! not near so bad,

since our Lord died where everybody could see. Ah! if Grand'mère were here—— But what would I? God is always here, and what do I and the dying want more?"

When Yolande had the Castle coachman's head in her lap, far gone as he was he recognised her, and remonstrated hoarsely, "You are good to me, miss, you whom I went for to trap! Who knows but it was the wust of my wust deeds?"

"Don't speak of it," negatived Yolande, with Grand'mère and Monsieur Landre's way of forgiving their enemies—so fine a way that it sounded as if the forgiveness were full, and as if it changed the name and the character which ordinary men and women give it, as they either brandish or dole it out, and made it large-hearted forbearance, tender brotherly kindness, sweet true love.

"There was a sinner who was in condemnation, as we all are, my coachman, who cried out that he had received the just reward of his deeds, and yet he asked a King who was waiting by him to remember him graciously when He came to His kingdom."

Yolande told the story of the Dying Thief to ears which grew greedy as they grew dull ; and the hearer was still capable of receiving the news and applying it to a parallel case, for he objected doubtfully

“But so be, miss, there is an odds in this here pass, for it be I alone who am fair punished. Harry and Will, little Hal, and Martin Reeves, most of all Master George, as is not guiltless, nay, but whose bidding we did, and for whose pleasure we did it—they all go scot-free—scot-free, and I be done for at one dang,” he repeated, wistfully.


“That is true,” assented Yolande simply ; “but must you be punished, and punished alone, when God is just, and his Son, our brother, says, ‘Repent, my coachman, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?’ What if you be taken away to keep you from heavier sin, and your fellows and your master spared to give them greater time for repentance? How know you their needs or their degree of guilt, or that you may not be the chosen, the favoured, to be summoned first by a summons which, if He will, cannot be too short?”

“Anan! You’re beyond me, clear or muddled. But you are good, and mappen they’re gooder aloft yonder. There may be mercy in the dang, I dunnot know, I howp so, and I know I never so much as howped the like before; for, Lord, I repent—I repent, help my repentance, and sain my soul.”

The victim of Mr. George’s orders and his own obedience to them, spoke no more.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Rider, and the Ride Home as it should  
not have been.*

OLANDE reverently covered the dead man's face with her handkerchief. In life the poor rough-living coachman would not have excited the slightest interest in Milly and Mr. George ; but Yolande was struck with the fact that now he was armed with qualities which made him an object of considerable speculation to the one, and of lively apprehension to the other. In the meantime the plight of the party was getting more grievous. The moon was setting, and there would yet be a long interval before the October dawn. Mr. George, closely wedged in, was stiffening in his bruises. Milly's shivers were running through her convulsively, and with aguish

chattering of the teeth. But there was no word yet of Mr. George's Harry heading an exploring expedition from the "Barley Mow" or the "Waggon Rest," or of any labourers trudging homeward and lending them a lift, or conveying speedy intelligence of their distress to a quarter whence help could come, before they were all dead from exposure and want. Yolande would have wandered alone in search of aid, and Mr. George could have trusted her, but Milly threatened to go into fits if Yolande left her for a moment "with *that*—you know what I mean, though you have no sensibility, Ma'mselle, not a particle—lying so near me. Oh! I declare *it* is moving, Ma'mselle!"

"Would that it were," answered Yolande, sadly, "though it may be a selfish wish, for this place is another than paradise. Yet what can be said to the wife who may be listening for his step and voice ere this hour to-morrow? How, Milly! what harm can the clay do when there was not even the black thrush in the poor still throat before the breath quitted it?"

“ Oh ! don’t speak of it, you strange stony creature, or else you’ll frighten me next yourself. But I don’t give you leave to stir from the spot—that’s poz—unless you take me with you, and as I can’t move, or even stand, you must carry me on your back.”

Then Yolande, listening intently to a faint noise in the distance, was certain that a flight of birds like lapwings had suddenly risen several fields off, and had uttered one or two cries as an announcement that they had been disturbed by an unexpected intrusion on their privacy and repose. Monsieur Landre had taught her to interpret the sounds she heard thus far, and to know that it was not the neighbourhood of Mr. George and his companions which had roused and offended the birds’ sense of propriety. Something must be stirring nearer them. Listening intently, Yolande believed that she detected the flap of bridle reins, the ring of stirrups, and the heavy motion of a well-trained horse feeling its way over broken ground.

Disregarding Milly’s frantic opposition, Yolande set off at once towards the point

whence the sounds came. Mr. George, on seeing her movement, indulged in some characteristic commentary loud enough to be heard by the running Yolande. "'Fore George, you are a complete Amazon, little Dupuy. You were a French puritan and mystic ten minutes ago, now you are preparing to clear a hedge like the Fair Huntress, instead of *la Belle Jardinière*. How many characters have you, if it is fair to ask? As many as the Montespan, or the Maintenon, Scarron's widow?" But Yolande, heeding not, scrambled up the bank to the left of them, tore her way through a hedge, toiled across the corner of a pasture field, and crying out at the pitch of her voice, "Hold! hold! to the right! help! help!" made an opening through another hedge, and all but fell exhausted, in the utmost disorder, at the feet of a man guiding a horse towards her.

"What has happened, Mademoiselle Dupuy?" demanded young Caleb Gage, catching hold of her, too agitated himself to mind his words. "You need not go any farther.

Now what an adventure for a girl who has just come out of a bad sickness! What can have befallen your friends that they suffer you to run like this over the fields, and at night too?

Without being aware of it, Caleb Gage spoke like a man aggrieved, and it did not require his impatient, indignant manner to cause Yolande's tongue to cleave to the roof of her mouth. The shock of the unknown helper turning out to be the young Squire of the Mall, and the concern as to what he would think of her, and how he would look on her trouble, were quite sufficient to reduce Yolande to the lowest ebb of distress and humiliation, without the amazement and vexation in his voice. Again the consciousness that he or any man could thus move her without holding, or seeking to hold, any claim upon her, filled her with shame and dismay.

“That it should be he! He will think me bold, lost to all modesty and dignity! What will he not think me? And if he thinks the worst—shall not I, who am a sheep at

the best, be punished for caring what he thinks?" All this passed through Yolande's mind in her pain and mortification, before she gasped, "There has been an accident, Monsieur,—a carriage overturned *en route*, and a man killed."

The brief communication served for the moment. It was of a grave enough character to warrant the manner of Yolande's appearance. The uncertainty who the man was that had been killed, combined with a horror that the victim might be Monsieur Dupuy himself, made Caleb feel an additional delicacy in questioning Yolande. So he turned with her, and rather than cross-examine her, he preferred to explain how he had been riding home to the Mall a good three quarters of an hour ago, by a road a good three quarters of a mile distant, when he had been startled in the quietness of the scene and the season by what he was certain were cries of distress uttered in a female voice. In his turn he had attempted to trace the sound, and it was with great difficulty he had found a footing for his

horse and reached the spot where she had accosted him ; for the cries had ceased for some time to guide his ear.

Lapsing into silence, in which throbbing hearts could be the better felt, Caleb Gage and Yolande traversed the short distance back to where Monsieur and Milly lay. But Yolande found the whole aspect of things changed. The valet Harry and the other servants had at last turned out from the inn, provided with lights and ropes. Under the smoky gleam and the flare of lanterns and torch-wood, half a dozen busy pairs of hands were raising the broken chariot. They were doing all they could to release the Honourable George, and had secured such of the horses as were not miles on their way to the Castle stables.

Yolande had yet another pang of regret. Caleb Gage's presence was no longer wanted, and without her intervention he might have passed them, and she might thus have escaped being seen by him in her miserably equivocal position.

As for Caleb, he stood confounded at the

sight of George Rolle, in his cynical, dissolute elegance forming the central figure in the group. He paid no heed to the salutation of Milly Rolle, whose spirits were beginning to revive, and who cried out with a giddy giggle and a childish insensibility to the world's opinion of her situation—

“Good day to you, Mr. Caleb Gage. Are you going to join us in our little junketing, if the old Squire and the preachers of your body will allow you? I vow you are the properest, most obedient fellow I know. But only for once, by way of frolic, Master Gage. And little Dupuy with us too, with regard to whom we all know that your father and her granny had intentions. Why, it happens quite pat that you two should foregather to-night. Who knows what the lucky coincidence may lead to? La! it is too pat when one comes to think who it was that flew off in the thick of our hobble, and lit upon you and your horse at the nick of time. For my part, I consider Ma'mselle is hugely sly.”

Caleb Gage, at the risk of being asked

why he “cut” a gentleman, and being accused of insulting him, did not so much as acknowledge Mr. George’s approved raising of his hat to greet the new comer. He did not take a step until it was forced upon his notice that, with none but servants who had been employing their spare time in drinking dog’s-nose at the inn, and who were farther flustered by the rating which had been administered to them on their first arrival, he was more likely to suffer than to benefit by the clumsy efforts made on his behalf. For the workers were only jamming his limbs still tighter, and aggravating beyond bearing their master’s dislocated collar-bone and sprained wrist.

Caleb Gage went forward then and exerted his skill and strength in the business. He said no word, however, until Mr. George, on being extricated, observed, without a shade of change in his *nonchalance*, “I suppose I need not thank you, sir? you will have none of my thanks; but, at least, allow me to explain that your lending me your valuable assistance has saved you, as a

clergyman's cloth saves him, from any obligation on my part to resent your appearance and what seems your uncalled-for disapprobation."

"I deny seeking to save myself from any result of this encounter, Mr. Rolle," answered Caleb, "though it may be convenient for you to leap to that conclusion, and equally so in the present case to hold that a clergyman's cloth shelters him from your defence of your deeds. I make bold to remind you that neither that, nor kinsmanship, has been a shelter from the deed itself. I cannot tell how your cousin, Mr. Philip Rolle, may act under such monstrous provocation. As for myself, although I little guessed the spectacle I was doing my poor endeavours to figure in, instead of standing aloof, as you clearly expect, and seeing a great wrong consummated, I have to say to those misguided young ladies who are travelling under what you, sir, are well aware is worse than no protection, that if they will suffer me to conduct them back to their families, nothing on earth will hinder me from being at their

service. And if you, Mr. George Rolle, or your servants, offer resistance to their return, which I beg and implore them, by all they have ever held dear and sacred, to set about, you will find that the small aid I have been able to render you need by no means stand in the way ; and that only what I am sorry to see are your bodily injuries must interpose between us."

Times and manners have changed since Huguenot families sought shelter in England, and the English gave it them, and a royal bounty besides, not without adding their quota of persecution to the gift ; so that a note of explanation may be here called for. Mr. George's speech implied that an act of charity or humanity on Caleb Gage's part had redeemed him from the penalty due to his mere presence there, accidental and passive as it had been till now. Mr. George would neither take the initiative in accusation, and "post" the Methodist Squire's son as a liar and scoundrel on the church-yard gate at Sedge Pond, or in the market-place at Reedham ; nor would he go

out to waylay and attack him with a horse-whip, because men educated like young Gage had a conscientious objection to the commonest use of pocket pistols. Caleb understood the speech and the sarcasm perfectly, and it sufficiently galled the strong, independent young man, who was accustomed to consider his strength and comparative impartiality as constituting him a natural safeguard and protection, not to his father and his father's friends only, but to all those whose backs were at the wall. He had taken a frank, honest satisfaction in such a partisanship, single-hearted and modest, which was something different, yet in many respects the same as the old fantastic generosity of the knight who believed in and meant to keep his vow of chivalry. To be taunted with his own exemption in the evil and bitter experience to which he had unexpectedly become privy, was more than the young man's spirit could stand. Already he had witnessed his standard of excellence shamefully torn down, his religious loyalty and purity brought into totally

unlooked-for contact with what he was not able to regard as other than the grievous wantonness and wickedness of the world. Caleb did not require the Honourable George's swagger to cause his heart to burn within him in sorrow and anger. He had only to look in despair at the shrinking, averted, delicate face of Yolande, and listen to the folly and coarseness of Milly Rolle's challenge, to drive him almost mad. So he had spoken in a towering passion, and succeeded in bringing some of the bad blood to George Rolle's cheek. The people clearing the road, and collecting the remains of the chariot, brought their occupation to an abrupt stop. Divided between the pugnacity produced by liquor, and the morbid appetite of vice, they stood shouldering each other, and waiting for an intimation from Mr. George to set upon the single man, who, in entire command of his youthful prime, vigour, and agility, was not yet altogether overmatched. Milly Rolle tossed her head, flounced, and called out,

“Did you ever hearken to such a con-

ceited, strait-laced pedagogue of a bumpkin? Punish him, Ma'mselle, by never letting on that you hear the insolent wretch."

But Yolande spoke with quivering lips and a dry voice.

"I have the honour to accept your escort, Monsieur. It was not with my wish that I came here." She could say no more. Courageously as Yolande could assert herself to a scoffing, unscrupulous sinner like George Rolle, there was some people to whom, if circumstances were against her, she could not defend herself, and Caleb Gage was one of them.

"Oh! little Dupuy, you heartless Madam, is that your French fashion of fidelity, to leave us in the lurch, and to think of deserting Mr. George when he has fallen into a doleful plight?" said Milly Rolle, not scrupling to reproach Yolande, who remained quite dumb.

Mr. George hesitated. Though he piqued himself on being a philosopher, it was gall and wormwood to him, as it would have been to his mother had she been in his place, to submit to be foiled in the most dis-

creditable of his schemes. On the other hand, he was a man of the world, and in many respects a shrewd one. He knew that he had failed in his little adventure already. He was not in a condition to prosecute it farther, however much amusement it might have afforded him, and however delightfully precarious and uncertain its termination. He should be glad of his fellow Harry's arm, and it would be the worse for the rascal afterwards if he could not time his steps to walk evenly so as to enable his master to drag himself to the promised inn, where he might have his hurts seen to, and procure the refreshment and rest of which he was so much in want. So far as his own comfort was concerned, he would be glad if Mistress Milly Rolle would take it into her feather head to follow Mademoiselle's example, and give him the slip on the first opportunity. He was getting sick of the exploit, and even without this odious *dénouement* it was proving too much for him. It might be very well by way of change to rave and rant a little about

“A pensive nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast, and demure,”

and to feel a mild curiosity, such as his mother had felt before him, to try whether he could not shake her out of her propriety and rout her heroics. But the experiment had not turned out to his satisfaction. The Huguenot had contrived to wound his vanity, and, particularly after this overturn, to deal hits which touched what softness was in him, and which he did not at all relish. By this plaguy intervention of young Hopeful from the Methodist nest at the Mall, the business would be blown over the neighbourhood, and if Mr. George persevered in carrying it out by main force, the scrape might be serious.

Writhing, wincing, and making faces from pain of body as well as the sharp taste of humble pie, Mr. George could not, therefore, be so dignified and lazily *debonnaire* and audacious as he was wont to be. It was with something like an ugly grin and an impotent gnash of his teeth that he said to Caleb, “My dear sir, I am not astonished

that the rôle of a gentleman is not altogether known to you. I am deeply grieved that I am not at present in circumstances to teach it you. Perhaps at some future time I may have that happiness. In the meantime I must inform you that I profess to be the ardent admirer and humble servant of the ladies in general, and of those two ladies in particular ; therefore you must see that I cannot contradict Mademoiselle Dupuy's wishes openly expressed—(let me observe aside, my dear young lady, that there was no occasion for so decided and sweeping a statement),—however they may take me by surprise, and inflict on me a cruel disappointment. So far from so ungallant and ungentlemanlike a course, my good young Mr. Jephunneh, if my dear cousin from the Rectory like to leave me to my fate also, and trudge away with you and Mademoiselle on your Rosinante, in the style of the tinker, the tinker's wife, and his apprentice, she may do so, unless you will please to wait till I send for another of my carriages? Pray allow me—I do not think

all the set are done for ; but she has my free permission and my best wishes, as well as the other goddess."

"Oh dear, no, Mr. George," cried Milly, obstinately. "I would not forsake you for the universe ; I have not the heart to do it ; I leave that to a fickle friend like Ma'mselle ; let her go, faugh ! she's no loss."

Mr. George was so thoroughly, basely selfish, that he put no weight on Milly's going or staying, except in reference to his own wayward inclinations ; and it was not on his cards to take guilt to himself by advising her to accompany Yolande, and by forcing Milly to leave him in spite of herself. He preferred doing Milly and her father, the Rector of Sedge Pond, his cousin and his mother's friend, the deadly injury of taking the girl at her word, and keeping her with him.

Caleb Gage was not sufficiently acquainted with the truth, and was too bent on rescuing Yolande from degradation and ruin, to stand by poor infatuated Milly, as he might otherwise have done. Yolande too was sinking

under the burden of shame which she had not deserved. She was overwhelmed with strange reproach, wounded tenderness, and outraged virtue; but yet she held out her hands piteously to Milly, as though it would be craven in her to quit her companion and give her up to her own wilful, crazy choice.

“Am I to go back alone, Milly? All is not lost yet, my friend. The past can still be undone. Have pity on yourself—on your parents.”

Milly only answered with senseless re-  
crimination and abuse, and Mr. George begged Mademoiselle not to protract her *adieux*, as he took his Harry's arm and called out “*bon voyage*.”

Here came out the miserable meanness of the man, which could exist in company with some faint sparks of valour and some dying embers of liberality—making a partial display of the rags and tatters of nobility. Mr. George could suffer the French girl, whom he had insulted and abused as far as he dared, and who, so far as she could, had repaid him good for evil, to go without a

word of explanation, without a sentence in vindication of the innocence which he and Milly Rolle had conspired to cloud and asperse.

But Mr. George did one good thing. His bearing, with its mannerly refinement and unshaken self-conceit, restrained his people from any expression of rude licence or outbreak of hostility. So when Caleb Gage had taken Yolande's cold hand and lifted her on his horse, arranging a pillion for her, and mounting before her as men and women were then accustomed to ride to church and market, he successfully extricated himself from the rubbish and the turmoil, passed the still and silent figure with the face still hidden by the handkerchief, and rode away into the night.

Yolande had not the slightest doubt of her deliverer ; she did not even distrust his wearied horse—because it was Caleb Gage's. She was going back to Grand'mère's swiftly, surely, and far sooner than she had any title to expect ; but for all that, Yolande thought she would have died where she sat.

Caleb was her deliverer, but not her champion. He was her friend, because he was "a kindly man among his kind," like his father before him, but he was without any faith in her perfect righteousness in this matter. Her lover he had never been, her husband he had refused to be; but it was hard that she should suffer this lowest depth of humiliation. Yolande did not suppose she could have suffered it but for what had gone before it—the sight she had seen, the words she had spoken that night. When she thought of these things she felt it would be the same a hundred years hence, whether she was honoured or defamed now. What was mortal man's praise and blame to the spirit which the common tragedy of death had placed in so new and solemn a light, that even Mr. George and Milly Rolle had been affected by it? Why should she make so much ado about the chances of this life, which was so brief at the longest, and at all times so pathetically uncertain, that she should be unable to survive this shame? Still, she could not appeal to Caleb Gage,

remonstrate with him, tell her story, and plead not guilty. To him her tongue was tied—would be tied, though she were to ride, not for a night, but for a life, behind him.

Caleb was desperately calm and gentle with Yolande, and all the more that his heart was very sore, with a soreness for which he saw no healing. His first thought had been to take her straight to Shottery Cottage and to Grand'mère, some eight miles distant. But his horse failed more and more, as Yolande's voice, answering his inquiries in monosyllables, sounded more sick at heart and weary, and the touch of her hand felt chiller. He feared that she would not be able to keep up, and would faint ere they reached her home. Then he considered the reception she might meet with, and that having so lamentably departed from her duty, her people might be harsh to her. The austere mother, the worldly father, and possibly even the pietist of a youthful-minded, foolish old woman might be bitter in proportion to the love

which they had borne to the sole child of the house, who would be its pride no more, and for whom it could do little else than take her in and hide her. He was sorry for these Huguenots, more sorry than he could have fancied he would have been for those an alliance with whom he had rejected, and whose society he had repudiated. Notwithstanding, it was not for him to subject a girl, however justly she had offended, to any but merciful treatment. There might be more hope of mercy—at least the danger of the shock, with the unrestrained lamentations and reproaches to which he must be a listener, would be averted if he left room for preparation.

To save Yolande from breaking down under his charge, and to defend her from the wrath of those who had a right to chide, but who might be tempted to abuse the right, Caleb Gage decided on taking Yolande first to the Mall, which was nearer than Sedge Pond, and which often served as a hospice for travellers. His father's presence would remove all objection to her lodging

there for the rest of the night. Some one of his second cousins might be persuaded into showing womanly attention and sympathy to this extraordinary claimant of the Mall's charity, so that she should not feel forlorn and forsaken in her repentance. For that she had repented was proved by her consenting to turn with him at the moment of his proposal. But oh! he thought, these light Gallic natures, so shallow-hearted, and quick to rue because quick to err! He had believed her the pattern of all maidenhood, only too wise and severe in her devotion to God and her Grand'mère, and to the performance of good works, and the acquisition of knowledge; whereas, woe to him! there was ground for Milly Rolle's loud complaint that Ma'mselle had deserted the man who had beguiled her (and for whom she had previously deserted faith, home, credit), the instant he was in distress and there was word of exposure. In this light, indeed, she seemed to add cunning calculation to hot passion.

Caleb therefore put before Yolande, in


measured, studiously softened tones, the desirability of their having recourse to the hospitality of the Mall. She neither offered resistance nor demurred, but submitted at once. Indeed, she was the most docile of charges, like a bird which is quiet and still because its wing is broken, or a little shot has pierced its breast, and blood-red drops are noiselessly eddying out over its speckled feathers. She had not even strength or wit enough left to descry that if her heart was breaking, her plight had the power to break the spirit of the man beside her; although it was her unbearable misery to think that she had no power over him, except to excite his humanity into combat with his hardly checked aversion. Another person might have seen that it was a bitter experience for Caleb Gage thus to bring Yolande Dupuy to the Mall, where he had refused to bring her in tender distinction—refused, and in his soul retracted his refusal, accusing himself of all blindness and prejudice. He had judged Yolande as far above him as the stars to which she had seemed fitly bound; and

now that he had her in his keeping, to carry her to his home as a vain moth whose wings had been singed, a poor victim of George Rolle's cruel kindness, it was enough to make him believe that he was not only himself guilty of woeful misconception and mistake, but that life itself was a huge blunder and failure. The pregnant blow of this one great evil was enough to crush the high hope and splendid trust of young manhood, so that they should never altogether recover their terrible fall. To the Samson whose wife betrayed him all women were from that moment so many Delilahs. Caleb Gage's dismal disenchantment might prove the turning-point from which the young Squire should start gradually but progressively on a new experience, until what was sweet in him should be leavened with sourness, and what was gentle trampled hard and callous; unless indeed he stood true to his religion in its manliness as in its godliness, and his religion stood true to him. The falseness of man or woman to the divine ideal of manhood, and in it of womanhood,

is no light wrong against a fellow-creature, nor is it to be lightly treated. It is the most disastrous misfortune, short of individual falseness to early promise and native light, which can happen to him or her who has taken the original for heroine or hero. Indeed, it is too often the precursor to such falseness, thus working twice death.

## CHAPTER III.

*Pity which stings and bites—Grandmère  
granting an Audience.*

ALEB GAGE, with Yolande, arrived at the red-and-white house of the Mall. He summoned in the two women—his father's trusted housekeeper, Libbie Larkins, and his ancient cousin Hephzibah—to lead Yolande through the dining-hall, which was only a deserted meeting-house and class-room, now that the evening exercise and the supper were long by. Their footsteps echoed along the stone passages as they passed the stripped pictures conspicuous in their elevation in the gallery, out of which looked female faces in every variety of head-gear, as if they had never even heard of such a thing as a distressed damsel like her who was now brought into

their honourable company of sister shadows. Yolande was conducted to one of the primitive dormitories, and there waited upon, and fed, and watched over with due consideration and regard.

Caleb could not suspect either of the women of failing in the duties which he required, or in the instincts which were natural to them. Libbie was a stout, matronly, middle-aged widow, with activity and notability marked upon her as the efflorescence of her methodistical Christianity, notwithstanding that the early Methodists were inclined to hold creature-comforts cheap. But certainly nobody undervalued or ran down her own gifts more than Libbie Larkins, so that she remained humble and affable amid her many attainments. She at once recognised Yolande as the grand-daughter of the gracious old French madam who had praised her goose pie and blackberry pudding, and had given her a valued lesson in tossing an omelette ; so highly-prized, indeed, that even now she itched to ask whether the young madam carried any re-

cipes in her pockets or at the tip of her tongue. But Libbie feared that she herself was a hardened sinner, so given up to fleshly lusts and gross appetites as not to be worthy of any ecstatic visions when she could think of anything so common as dishes and diets instead of calls and convictions—subjects which she felt were better suited to this young woman of the world, who had allowed herself to be betrayed into a scandal. The young Squire had not said what had brought Yolande to the Mall, but had explained that this was a young mistress with whose family the old Squire was on friendly terms, as Libbie very well knew, and that she had taken fright at the first word of warning, and had hastened to accept his invitation to be restored to her friends. Libbie would know how to deal with a young lady who had allowed herself to go so far in undutifulness and imprudence, and yet not hurt or humble her. If it had been fair-time, Libbie would have conjectured that Ma'mselle had been at Reedham fair without leave; as it was, she saw that she must have been

mixed up with some other giddy doings.

Mistress Hephzibah Gage was the model of an old maiden of sixty. She was slim, where Libbie was buxom; and shy, where Libbie, in spite of her Methodism, was free-spoken and demonstrative. She was a creature of the most limited experience and the most one-sided information. Having led an utterly secluded youth, and having dwelt for a long time by herself on a narrow income before coming to the Mall, she had a crystal simplicity and purity about her graces, and a pensive, elevated unworldliness in her character, which impressed all who came in contact with her; and, above all others, Libbie Larkins, who did not know any quality or acquirement which struck her more powerfully than blessed Mistress Hephzibah's combination of innocence, ignorance, and enthusiasm. She had been converted to Methodism on her first visit to her brother and his wife, and had then joined the society, and been identified with it ever since.

Neither Libbie Larkins nor Mistress Heph-

zibah were of the kind of women to be exacting with other women, though both, in very different styles, were intolerant to themselves. Thus it befell that though their faith was noble, their instincts, purified by their faith, in general stood them in better stead than their principles. But the circumstances of this case warped their instincts. It was true, they saw and admitted, that the unfortunate young lady was not an undaunted offender. Her foreign speech, little as there was of it, was sweet in its gratitude; and just because she was a gentlewoman in undreamt-of straits, she was careful not to put anybody about or to engross too much attention. Libbie Larkins and Mistress Hephzibah would have been the last women on earth to visit a first transgression with heavy punishment. The one woman was too near spotlessness herself to shrink from contamination with the spots in others; while the other was too large-hearted, too much given to serving, not to have room and pity for every culprit. But both women were jealous in the interest

of a man connected with them. The young Squire was their chief favourite. To Libbie it was sufficient that he was her young master; to Mistress Hephzibah, that he was her young kinsman. Still they had not attained to such Christian stature that they could cast out fear either in their love or in their charity, like the old Squire or Grand'mère. They did not like that the young Squire should be disturbed, as he manifestly was, by an unfortunate young lady. "What call had she," Libbie would say to herself, indignantly,—“a young hussy no better than she should be, after all, and a lover of pleasure—to trouble Master Caleb so?” Mistress Hephzibah, on the other hand, would be fearful of Yolande's moving young Caleb by look, word, or gesture.

So it came about that Mistress Hephzibah, surprised in the middle of the night, and called to appear in nothing less maidenly than a high-cauled cap towering above her fine but meagre features, and a starched neckerchief folded round her wizened throat, and Libbie, in her petticoat and coloured

handkerchief knotted round her head, were both somewhat frozen and official in their friendly offices, even when Libbie proposed, "Don'tee think I had better heat some elderberry to warm the poor heart of her, Mistress Hepzie?" and when Mistress Hephzibah, thinking that a poor young body might be too frightened to lie all alone in a strange room and a strange house, more by token after she had been doing wrong, went to fetch her "Songs of Zion," that she might lull her to sleep even as a child. The two women were a little like the Pope of Rome washing the twelve beggars' feet, inasmuch as their beneficence had something in it of supererogatory good works, done more for their own sakes than for that of the recipient. They pitied her like Christians, and ministered to her like Christians, but they could not heartily take to her, believe in her, or hope in her. The elderberry wine seemed to scald Yolande's throat, and the hymns, plaintive or ardent, which the cracked voice gave as a cradle song, caused bitterer tears to flow beneath her closed

eyelids than the girl had ever shed before.

Caleb, having given over his charge, went to see his father, to tell him what he had done, and to take counsel with him as to the conveyance of Yolande to the Shottery Cottage.

The time had been when the old Squire's motto was the brave Methodist injunction, "Study yourself to death, and then pray yourself to life again;" but age, with its diminished powers and advancing infirmities, demanded another regimen—one of temperate study, early hours, and sunset rest. Caleb had, therefore, to go to his father's room and awake him from an old man's fitful, dosing slumber, that he might listen to his story. There, as in the great kitchen where the Squire's chair stood in the chimney corner, the only ornaments, with the single exception of a woman's inlaid work-table, were books. There was even a shelf of books within the bed over the pillow, so that the Squire slept under the mighty shades of his Homer and Virgil, his Plato and Plutarch, and of a Hero divine in an in-

finitely higher sense than all who had gone before Him—He who, rising from his pillow, could rule the winds and the waves, and who, rising from his bed of death, could open a new world. There were a few maps, not only of England, but of America, with blue and red lines traced on some of them, marking out the circuits on which many a time the Squire had himself ridden, with his wife Lucy on a pillion behind him. And there were black-bordered, black-lettered cards of Methodist conferences, more quaint and suggestive than ornamental in those days, and rather calls to duty than pieces of self-indulgence, with their set times and set subjects appointed for meditation and prayer ; as well as lists, in the Squire's own hand-writing, of objects for his bounty, and liberal undertakings to be attempted by him.

Among these homely surroundings, old Caleb Gage sat up in his tasselled night-cap, and heard the narrative which his son, sitting on the front of the bed, delivered to him. The good Squire was great enough to

bear being disturbed, and was almost as well accustomed to receiving dispatches at all hours as a commander-in-chief or a cabinet minister. But though he could collect his wits rapidly, and with the instinct of genius get at the truth of a communication, he could make little of Caleb's incoherent account. His fine eyes, which Yolande had asserted saw into heaven, looked away farther than ever as they clouded over with wonder and perplexity; and all the help the Squire gave his son was to go on arguing—

“Is there no mistake, lad? . Art sure you mistook not some other poor Ma'mselle for Yolande, the time being night, and you having small acquaintance with the rare child of old Madame Dupuy? Did she give her name, my boy? How did she answer for having to do with what is so far removed from what I took her for—the wretched trick of running off? You never asked! Why not? It would have given her a chance for an explanation. It passes my poor brain, Son Caleb. I can compass the Rector's daughter's deficiency,—though

Philip Rolle is an honourable man, and no mere dead dog of a watchman, whatever the body may say to the contrary, and from my soul I pity him on account of this stab from his kinsman; but for that child, Madame Dupuy's daughter, whom I saw in her reverence standing and waiting in the background of her mother's parlour, only coming forward when there was danger to be faced and work to be done, at the dying beds in the hovels of Sedge Pond, as a right hand of her grandmother, I confess, it beats me quite. If I did not know you better, I should say that you were blind with prejudice and rancour to even think of her as running off with George Rolle. The mystery of iniquity shall work; but if it begins to work in such quarters, among the green boughs planted by the river, it is more than I have witnessed yet of its corruption; and, my son Caleb, it striketh me the world must be coming to an end, and perhaps the sooner the better."

The old Squire's rooted incredulity sustained a sharp assault from his son's repeated

excited assertions that it was Ma'mselle from the Shottery Cottage, and no other; that she had been with George Rolle and Milly Rolle in the chariot of the former, with a suspicious muster of Rolle's servants; that the party, after sustaining an overturn, were found, as dark night was coming on, ten miles from Sedge Pond; and that any defence Ma'mselle had vouchsafed to plead was a single sorry sentence, which, he must say, was contradicted by all the presumptive evidence, and by the testimony of her companions—that she was not there by her own wish. “Why, seeing was believing, was it not, sir?” Caleb ended, conclusively.

When at last Squire Gage's obstinate unbelief yielded to the force of facts, he gave one of the deepest groans he had ever uttered.

“Poor soul! I could not have thought it. How she must have been tried; ay, and got the better of at last by some black villainy!”

Young Caleb could stand the scene no longer, and left the room with even scantier

ceremony than Grand'mère had taken exception to, in her mission, an age before.

But the Squire did not dream of taking offence—would have laughed at the bare idea of disrespect on the part of his trusty, faithful son. To doubt his son's entire regard, pent up in one channel till the attachment had acquired a womanly fondness and playfulness, would have been to receive still more conclusive proof than the withdrawal of Yolande Dupuy from the ranks of the noble and the true, that the solid earth was slipping from beneath his feet.

However, the Squire did perceive some singularity in his lad's restiveness in dealing with a scandal which, as events had happened, was no concern of his, unless as a matter of common humanity.

“Like his mother before him,” reflected the Squire, “the lad had always magnanimity, and to spare. I am afraid I hurt him by my scurvy hint otherwise. If my dame ever spoke a spiteful word of any human being,—and being a woman, and a sprightly one by nature, it stands to reason that she

sometimes fell into one of the special transgressions of her sex,—yet give her a cause of personal provocation, and you shut her mouth close, where another woman would open hers wide. Caleb is of the same humour. In place of crowing over the indiscretion and the disgrace of the young French girl who went against his grain at the first—because, according to our different customs, it was as if poor old Madame had thrown her at his head when he had no inclination towards her, and when the gadding gossips who knew no better twitted him with the advance, and caused it to rankle deeper than it should have done—now, he is vexed for the end. Being a chip of the old block—on his mother's side—it shames his irked independence and saucy pride. And well it may, when I had fancied the lass was a youthful foreign copy of his own mother—such a virtuous young lady as John Milton painted in black and white, and John Dryden writ of as Mistress Anne Killigrew. I have never been tainted with the Pelagian heresy, or doubted that the

old Adam in us was both deceitful and ill to eradicate, yet I profess I cannot get to the bottom of Grand'mère Dupuy's virtuous young lady being made out no better than a vain court madam."

Yolande meantime lay wide awake in one of the little guest-chambers like pilgrims' cells. Long after the solemn, sweet quaver and fervent ring of the Methodist hymns had sunk in silence, and Mistress Hephzibah had departed, trusting that the misguided young woman had gone to sleep with something better in her mind than she was accustomed to have there, Yolande lay and thought painful thoughts. She had borne the first brush of misfortune gallantly, and made a good defence while she was still in the thick of the fight. Now that the worst was escaped, and there might at least have been a breathing space for a rally of her forces, she only debated whether she should not ask to be led into the presence of the old Squire, and make a declaration of her innocence to him, even though she should fall down on her knees and

beseech him to believe her. But he was the father of the man she loved, and exculpating herself to the one was like seeking indirectly to excuse herself to the other. She felt the words would die upon her lips. She would rather go out wronged and maligned in the judgments she most cared for than have recourse to such means to alter them. Before the air of the Mall, which was so refreshing to others, should stifle her, or its hospitable roof crush her, she would be gone back for ever to her poor home and her own Grand'mère. But then how should she face the Rector and Madame Rolle, who had been kind to her, now that Milly was miserably gone? Milly being the principal sufferer by her own folly, Yolande had ceased to think of herself and her own wrong, having been trained up by Grand'mère to believe that she was her brother's keeper.

In the morning it was settled that young Caleb Gage should start at once for the Shottery Cottage, to solicit a private interview with the family, and communicate,

what they would doubtless be thankful to hear, the comparative honour and safety of the daughter of the house. Yolande herself would set out under the more proper wing of Mistress Hephzibah or Libbie, and arrive in time to confirm Caleb's statement, and throw herself on the mercy of the friends whose friendship she had spurned.

The old Squire, urged by his benevolence and his regard for Grand'mère, would have journeyed himself on the errand, painful though it was, but he was not the eye-witness of what his son had need to set forth plainly; and Squire Gage's relations with the head of the Huguenot family in the person of Grand'mère had been so much more intimate, that it seemed there would be greater delicacy in the younger man's discharging the unwelcome task. Besides, the Squire had been for some time, with a little pain, perhaps, but a great deal more pleasure, withdrawing himself and putting forward his successor in the more active duties belonging to his station, with which this neighbourly office might be classed.

Caleb rode along by the pastures and the edge of the Waäste in a wild, windy, rainy morning, only partially recovered from his disorder of the previous evening by the tossings of a sleepless night. As he proceeded, he felt something of a wild man's savage satisfaction in the weather, in the landscape which he loved being blurred and blotted out, because he was deadly sick at heart. Yet it would not have signified to Caleb though all the haunts of bird and beast, and all the tokens of man's dominion over them, had been spread out in their freedom and fineness of detail before him. The broad whole, which was a glorious marvel, and every individual part of it which was a wonder, would not have arrested and occupied him at the moment, for all his inclination would have been to shake his fist, and hold up his hand to Heaven against the dominant white blot of the Rolles' Castle, which lay like a treacherous spider's web in his path.

But what if old Madame Dupuy should not believe him against the Rolles, who had

flattered and befooled the Frenchwoman at one time or another, as he had heard? What if she should suspect him of feigning the character of mediator, and of having himself been an actor in the running off he had pretended to have come upon? What if she should fancy that he had become the inventor of a malicious falsehood, in order to turn away suspicion from himself and cloak his own guilt? Such guile was not without its parallel any more than the deed of violence which it would seek to screen. Grand'mère knew the Rolles better than she knew him; and while they had been her professed friends, he had been all but her declared enemy, and from what she had learnt of his sullen pride and resentful vindictiveness, she might suppose him capable of a base, cowardly, cruel retaliation on her involuntary offence. These disquieting thoughts occurred to Caleb, and kept time with his gallop.

When Caleb reached Sedge Pond he heard that Monsieur had not yet returned, and, from his having taken exactly the op-

posite road to that which he ought to have pursued, he argued that Monsieur's return would not be a speedy one. He had set out in full chase, with a flourish of the trumpets of his woe ; and although Caleb should have acknowledged that the poor *émigré* tradesman had shown more human nature in the proceeding than in others which had gone before it, yet, in his distempered condition, he only writhed anew at the fresh publicity which had thus been given to Yolande's offence.

Finding himself at the garden gate, which he had not entered for more than twelve months, Caleb hammered at it till two porteresses rushed at once to let him in. Prie, with her head swathed in a huge roll of flannel resembling a shako, appeared in breathless haste; but she was outrun by Deb, who in one night had shot up, like the bean-stalk of the redoubtable Jack, to the stature, both bodily and mental, of a giantess. Her clumsy, massive features were now positively grand, as they were set in stanch resolution, or worked with slow but sleuth-hound sagacity.

Both reached the gate and assailed the unlucky new-comer: "What news, master? Where be the child? What ha' they done with her?"

Caleb Gage was reduced to such a state of suppressed passion that he did what no Gage for a generation before him had done—he shook off his fellow-creatures in distress, and refused to relieve their anxiety. He bade them send the old Madame to him on the instant, and strode on before them, refusing to take any notice of them, though Deb kept up with him, and plied him with questions, trying even to tempt him with counter information. "Pearson he comed home late last night, and when he heered one of his darters were gone, and how and with whom, as old Madame here bade him be informed fust thing, well, he did just nothink at all. But fust he went into a towering temper, he did, and he called up all the servants as weren't gone to bed on account of the family misfortune, from Harper's Sally to Black Jasper, and bade them never mention Mistress Milly's name in the house again, as they

valued their places, and to stop all search for her, because her were not worth it, and he forbade it. If she came back of her own accord, loike prodigal son did, then he would remember, to his sorrow and shame (Madam swounded dead off at them words), he were her feyther; but not till then. Howsomever, old Madame said that were not the way of the Good Shepherd—not with the lost sheep, and her charge were with the ewe lamb.”

But Caleb Gage thought to himself that the Rector of Sedge Pond knew best, and was he called upon to expatiate to the servants on Yolande Dupuy’s delinquencies? It was bad enough to have to explain what he had seen and done to those who were entitled to the information at his hands. So, silently and haughtily, he went to await Grand’mère, in the cottage parlour. Once within the Shottery Cottage, there came a revulsion in Caleb’s mood. The dark and sombre parlour forced itself on his dazzled eyes, shining with the reflection of love and duty. To another its wants of embellish-

ment, and complete absence of any evidence of recreation or diversion, might have told of a cramped, chilled, stunted life—its deprivations almost a warrant for outrage against authority. But Caleb Gage's healthy, genial soul did not understand such an argument, with God's sun overhead, and his green earth around, and down in the depths of the human heart such exhaustless treasures of affection ready to spend themselves on every living thing. Though stupid, and smarting under a blow, he could not shut out what he saw and remembered of that room. There were the pillow and bobbin, and the tapestry frame with the tasks half finished, lying as Yolande had left them, reminding him that the Huguenot women worked boxes full of lace and tapestry for Monsieur's trade stores. But Grand'mère was fourscore, and Madame was the house mother, and was too much of a demagogue and declaimer to speak with her fingers. It was by Yolande's unfailing application that the task was accomplished. And Caleb knew that there is no discipline short of

suffering equal to the noble, self-denying discipline of honest work—all the nobler when it is work in an intelligent and a skilful craft—a trained yet voluntary contribution to the great prayer-offering of labour. The temptation which would prevail over an undisciplined, vagrant-willed, idly-disposed being like one of the Rectory girls, must be widely removed from that of a dutiful, meek, closely employed daughter like Yolande. With the Rectory girls, home pursuits and entertainments were all mixed up with beads, spangles, and tinsel, powders and washes, and not with long spells of work. Their heaviest labour had been to hang gaudy, incongruous patches about their stomachers and trains, making them more like peacocks than ever, till they cried out for the spots on their tails to be changed. The most humanising occupations the Rectory girls had were teasing Black Jasper and fondling their lap-dogs. But when Yolande had a brief holiday, as in the days after her illness, it was given to weed and water, prune and guide the flowers in

Grand'mère's *jardinière*, to note even the commonest wayside plant, or to make friends with the homeliest animal that breathed. And there still lay her silver weeds, the broken-winged sparrow she had saved from the hawk, and the crippled field-mouse she had come upon in the furrow. To Caleb Gage the works of God were another Word, and these simple tokens so many commandments to reverence and purity, so that to quit their devout study, and indulge in levity and recklessness, seemed to him well-nigh incredible. "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?"

Then there thronged back on Caleb's mind all Yolande's antecedents, which gave the lie to her frailty. Monsieur, he felt, was only a degenerate scion of his sect, and he had not appreciated Grand'mère; but he had grown to fancy that all the old Huguenot nobleness, sincerity, earnestness, and tenderness had revived and culminated in

Yolande, of whom a colt like him would have none, when she was put by a miracle within his grasp. Was this the stuff that slight women are made of? Was this the girl who had run off with the Honourable George Rolle and his cousin Milly? More baffled than ever, though less utterly miserable, Caleb waited for Grand'mère.

At last Grand'mère entered, in a Lyons silk gown, mob cap, and mittens, a silver dove in her breast, and a staff, like a cherry with a cherry-stalk, in her hand. It struck Caleb Gage that the old Frenchwoman, who had been his *bête noire*, had something of the queen about her—something of the Berthas and Mauds, mothers of their people. He could not help feeling abashed before the old Madame, who in the midst of her trouble was neither impulsive nor extravagant in her welcome of him, as he had expected. She was sedate, with a quiet dignity, in the keenness of her intelligence and her mobility of expression, which would not break out freely now, because its owner could rule her own fine spirit.

But Grand'mère was not alone. Her dark satellite of a daughter-in-law followed, and not only Madame, but Prie and Deb, with the freedom accorded in old French households, trod on each other's heels in the doorway, in order to hear whatever concerned the family. And Caleb was called upon to deliver himself of his detestable mission in the hearing of the whole household! It was all over with Yolande so far as hiding her fault went, but Grand'mère might not be aware how nearly his tidings affected her child, and it was barbarous to make him spread them. So after his low bow to old Madame's low curtsey, he said—

“Madame, I sought to speak with you alone.”

Caleb's head hung down a little as he spoke, and he plucked at the button of his hat and the flaps of his waistcoat, betraying that he was grievously perturbed.

“Monsieur, there cannot be too much linen in a household,” replied Grand'mère, with deliberate and, as it sounded, mocking sententiousness. “I kiss the hand to him

who will not speak in a high voice before my people."

"As you will," yielded Caleb, in indignant despair. "I have come to tell you that Mademoiselle is found."

"God be praised!" cried Madame, the mother, in her sonorous voice, which had uttered only jeremiads for many a day.

"The Lor'—but He do be good!" burst in Deb, with an ecstasy of satisfaction at the conviction which redeemed the dishonouring doubt the sentence implied.

"Let's go to the chile. You imperent, ignorant babby, Deb Potts, get out of my way now," insisted Priscille, putting her best foot foremost, and plunging with her head after it, in a manner which threatened to land her in the centre of the circle, by way of taking a step to Ma'mselle.

But Grand'mère, with her high spirit, chastened as it had been, let no sign break from her, save the loveliest pink blush, like that of a maiden, in her withered cheek, and the glow, as of golden fire, in her grey eyes. She would not show what had been her

faithlessness by praising her God now ; she would not compromise her child by confessing to that young man what her terror for Yolande had been ; for he had made himself strangest of the strange toward them. Grand'mère knew what the odium of a *mariage manqué* was in France, and how hard it would have been to bear for her Yolande there ; but the brutal discourtesy with which this young man in England had added insult to injury, along with the errand on which he now came, was more than Grand'mère's flesh and blood could stand, and she told herself she did well to let him feel his strangeness now.

“ *Oui-dà*, I looked for the discovery. It must have come sooner or later,” she observed, composedly. “ What then, Monsieur Caleb ? ”

“ I have the profound grief——” Caleb hurried on, more inclined than ever to break down in ungovernable passion, uncalled-for as the paroxysm would be beside Grand'mère's stony insensibility.

She swerved from her firmness as he hesi-

tated to proceed. "You do not say a young saint on earth has escaped from men and devils to be the youngest saint in heaven?" she asked, with a quick fluttering of her heart, but without altogether losing her composure even at that idea.

"I do not know how that may be, Madame," answered Caleb Gage, losing his self-command entirely. "If it had been a young saint of mine, I should have taken care to guard her with soul and body; as for yours, she intercepted me last night after nightfall, while I was on my way to the Mall. She was running for aid for her associates and friends, Mr. George Rolle from the Castle, and one of the young Mistress Rolles from the Rectory, with whom she had been driving to destruction, as far as my dull wits could cope with the circumstances, when they were overturned in the Whitecates Road, and the ditch adjoining."

"Serve 'em right, if Ma'mselle lighted on her feet!" exclaimed Deb emphatically.

"An' weren't none of her tender bones broke, be'st sure, young Squire?" Prie urged,

recalling him to the important point sternly.

But Grand'mère only smiled brightly. "The little one ran for aid? Good! I have no reason to doubt what you say, Monsieur; I doubt it not. Pardon me, but the act proves that was the little one all over."

Caleb stared blankly. Was there ever such reception of such tidings? Were all the wits of the Shottery Cottage household gone wool-gathering, and was all feeling gone after them?

Instead of answering his silent protest, Grand'mère inclined her head as if listening to the distant sound of wheels, although he could not hear them.

"*Ouais*," she cried, "Yolandette is here! But stay, I pray you, until she comes, my Monsieur, and we see how the culprit looks."

The Mall had lent Yolande its farm waggon, since she did not chance to ride Darby and Joan fashion with Caleb or his father. Libbie Larkins sat beside her, gravely mindful of her comfort, and gravely watchful, lest a naughty young creature who had been with-

in a hair's breadth of the sad end of naughtiness, should precipitate herself from the foot of the waggon, and run away again at the last moment. But within an incredible time for a waggon to draw up and its passengers to be lifted down, Yolande came flying along the garden path, leaving Libbie Larkins as bewildered as her young master under the flash of new light, while she panted and toiled behind her.

Into the door, into the parlour, without a word of pardon, a thought of shame, ran Yolande. She hugged Grand'mère, embraced her people all round, and sobbed and laughed at last, though it was no laughing matter. "*Mémère*, I have got back to you. Were you frightened out of your mind? But little Deb saw us taken prisoners. *Ma foi!* we call her little because she is great every way, that Deb. But what a game, Grand'mère! It was worse than the four corners for the children, and we no longer children, and the month October, and not April, to make fish of us! Ah, what a miserable game and a fooling for the poor Milly! But I begin at

the end. Behold me, Grand'mère, and all you who cannot help believing me. I am back; no one suspects me, no one shames me. Ah! my heart, how happy I am!"

"*Chut! peronnelle*," remonstrated Madame. "Grace of God, Yolande!" she reminded the girl in solemn exultation, "the good God of the Huguenots faileth never."

"If little Deb had been bigger, as big as some folk a' know," declared Deb, sniffing significantly, "some other folk 'ud ha' smarted for putting so much as a finger on Ma'mselle."

"Nay, now, Ma'mselle," grumbled Prie, "you've been and smirched your wrapper; and who be to clean you, a'd like to know, when the great wash be long done? You be a pretty young 'un to get into damage, and have we in a frenzy for you, and let your bodyclothes be done to sticks to boot."

Grand'mère almost laughed in Caleb's white, melted, averted face. Then something of her natural graciousness, dashed with a shade of scorn, returned to her face and voice.

“Monsieur my young Samaritan, you and yours are truly good Samaritans. A thousand thanks and praises for that, and for your succouring the child in her need. But she was not a thief, though she fell among thieves. What! my friend, was it necessary that you should be told that? Where were your eyes, your heart? Bah! Monsieur George, her heartless, heedless assailant, knew better than that.”


“It is true, Madame,” answered Caleb, with bitter mortification, though there was such a flood of sweet satisfaction at the bottom of his heart, that it welled up through all his hate and rage against himself. “I will not have one word of thanks or praise. No, there is nothing too bad to say of me for my blindness and grossness.”

And Caleb went away, knowing that Yolande was saying, “Don’t be hard upon him, Grand’mère; he showed he was my neighbour; though he was so mad, he must needs believe his eyes against me—me, Grand’mère, and the God who made me,” and saying it with the sweetness of her restoration

to unsullied innocence and crystal truth. To Caleb it was like a restoration to Paradise, for a blessed vision was swimming before his eyes, and a blessed harmony sounding in his ears, comforting him for his harshness.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The Service Required of the Old Squire.*

“Y son, I am mightily thankful for this solution,” said old Caleb Gage. He and his son sat together in the chimney-corner, the only spot sacred to them in their own roomy mansion, at that hour of the twenty-four—the hour of setting the large establishment in order for the evening exercise, when the big house-place and kitchen were vacant of other company.

The Squire was seated in his great chair, the back of which rose in a high oaken peak, like the canopy of a throne. As he sat he gazed, with the thoughtful pleasure of long use and wont, on what were in themselves not disagreeable objects to contemplate, or at least not less attractive than the spindle-legged furniture and fantastic japanned-work

ornaments of the best parlours of the day. On a sharp gusty October night, few sights could be more welcome than the great glowing hearth—the hereditary post of the mastiffs, terriers, and colleys, lying curled or stretched around it in basking luxury. In keeping with the hearth were the settles, only less black and polished than the rafters, together with Libbie Larkins's cluster of fitches and wreaths of pot-herbs. The burnished copper and pewter reflected the warmth and brightness quite as well as silver and china would have done; while the Squire's favourite books, with the rich tan and deep brown of their calf-skin, were not a whit more out of place as silent witnesses to the traffic of a kitchen, than as solitary occupants of a library, with its state prepared for them alone. They lent the power and grace of culture to narrowness and rudeness, the honour of high thinking to the homeliness of plain living.

The young Squire looked less in love with his position. There was all the difference between the young Squire and the old,

that is commonly recognised between the flower of men and of women. The young Squire had a man's share of sedateness and clearness, and of that coolness which is not cold, but genial and fruitful as the climate and soil of the temperate regions of the earth ; and the old Squire had a woman's generous enthusiasm and fine instinct, with her wonderful power of self-abnegation and devotion. And on these qualities in his young father, Caleb Gage was inclined to look with tender and reverent respect.

Yet young Caleb glanced around him with an expression akin to disgust, as he sat in the settle, and fretted in gloom and vexation, while bearing his father company. But for all his sense of incongruity between his wishes and his surroundings, Caleb, in his uprightness and manly broad-shouldered figure, presented a less striking and distinguished personality than the Squire, with the stoop of age and its rugged furrows, even his eyes being robbed of their beaming by that other world's approaching so near as to cast its shadow across them.

“I am mightily thankful for the clearing of Ma’mselle,” repeated the Squire; “it was a dog’s trick of George Rolle, and silly people will continue to tattle of what they can’t know the rights of—there’s the worst of it—but no generous tongue will bring the misadventure up against the young woman. It would have been the queerest, most distressing transformation of a lamb into a goat, or a dove into a crow—and you know the contrary natures of the creatures, Son Caleb—had a Huguenot indeed, of old Madame’s rearing, been found to aid and abet a fine gentleman. I don’t believe in any confusion in human nature, any more than in the animal kingdom, beyond what sin breeds; and here grace abounded to conquer sin. And I protest I was slow to believe in poor modest Ma’mselle’s delinquency all of a sudden. Now that I come to think of it, I am astonished that you could, sir. As her bated, provoked, true-spirited grandmother demanded, where were your eyes, where was your heart, young man?”

“You know, father, I was always a stupid

dog, a dolt, an idiot; but for all that, you ought to make the best of me," half groaned, half grumbled Caleb, divided between discontent with himself and a general quarrel with the world.

"I do make the best of you, my boy," answered old Caleb, demurely, "particularly as you are not quite such an ill-conditioned oaf as it is your pleasure to represent yourself. And after all, Mr. George and that foolish infatuated lass of the Rector's may not have undone themselves, either, so clean as we are inclined to conclude," he ended more gravely.

But young Caleb, awkward and uncomfortable as he was, had his own reasons for not letting the conversation drop, or suffering it to diverge to the desperate circumstances of Mr. George and Mistress Milly.

"So you marvel, sir, at my setting down Mademoiselle Dupuy as an accomplice in her elopement, when she made neither complaint nor defence to me worth speaking of, to account for her situation?" returned Caleb,

staring at the wall opposite him, as if he were viewing the facts of the case inscribed there altogether in the abstract.

“The depredators were already punished, the havoc they were working was like to stop,” argued his father. “You did not ask the girl a single word to warrant her in attempting to exculpate herself. Your behaviour, by your own account, was considerably stronger evidence of your ill-will and rancour towards an unfortunate Huguenot family, than I could have believed you capable of,” ended the Squire a little testily, owing to the pain it gave him to speak severely to his son. But he returned almost immediately to his usual frank, trustful tones: “You see I deal plainly with you, lad, as the kindest mode in the long run.”

“I want you to deal plainly with me, whether kind or unkind; you could not be unkind to me,—of course that is nonsense, sir. But you really think that I condemned Yolande unheard, and that I bear a rascally ill-will to her and her family?”

“Softly; I did not say rascally,” objected

the Squire, a good deal vexed and puzzled. By-the-bye," he went on, interrupting himself, "draw a pitcher of claret for yourself, if you care for it." He fancied that the grimly spoken words, which he could not understand, came out of a dry throat, and he did not seek to confine his son to the iced water he had himself taken to when he and Mr. John Wesley were students together, and thought tea too stimulating. "Let your discourse be seasoned with salt—that is, not the Attic salt of pungent wit and keenness in controversy, but the Christian salt of strict truth, moderation, and as much amiability as an Englishman can muster. Ah, lad! if thou hadst but known my old comrade, William Fletcher of Madeley, with every look and tone as benign as it was firm. But I have put my foot into it, haven't I?" asked the Squire, arresting himself with a mixture of consternation and lurking fun—"treated you to a hair of the dog which bit you, by way of a profitable lecture on good manners. Seriously, Caleb, I opine that there is an obliquity in your vision where these French

folks are concerned. Such an affection doth trouble many a man who is otherwise liberal and affable in his walk and conversation. It works on you in this way, that it causeth you to rise off your wrong side, and be in your wrong mind and mood whenever this subject is broached, though you are not crabbed or churlish on other subjects," concluded the Squire anxiously.

Young Caleb laughed a short laugh. "Why, father, I thought you were a wise man—deemed an oracle, indeed, in the society."

"I don't know that I ever pretended to be a sage"—old Caleb defended himself from the new attack with great composure and coolness—"but neither am I aware that I have said or done anything so silly on the present occasion that my own flesh and blood should twit me with weakness."

"Oh! but you have committed a signal error this time, if you never made one before in your life," protested young Gage, rising and looking at the dogs, and stirring them with his foot. "Look at Beaver,

father, how ragged his ears are, and that young lurcher is getting his wisdom teeth. What do you call yourself when both you and your friends at the Shottery Cottage mistake love for hatred?"

"You don't mean to say that, Caleb?" exclaimed Squire Gage, laying down the pipe he had been smoking, and rising to his feet in sheer amazement.

"I do mean to say it," Caleb took the word out of his father's mouth. "And, more, I hold that too many cooks have spoiled this as well as other kail—the worse luck to the supper," he finished ruefully.

"No, but you must have been as perverse and peevish as a woman," remonstrated the Squire, "and I reckoned you such a reasonable, sensible lad. If any young man was safe to know his own mind, I thought it was you, who are like a rock for steadiness and solidity. Oh, dear! I have been mistaken in you, Caleb."

"I am sorry for it, sir," Caleb confessed. "I always knew myself to be good for nothing, and something of a hypocrite; not

that I lent myself to regular imposition, but I was only quiet because I am such a slow, stolid mule, and you offered me no pretext for breaking out; you were too good to me, and affronted me into my best behaviour; and see how ill I have behaved on the first provocation."

"But I don't know that you have behaved so ill," the Squire said, quickly relenting; "your conduct in a woman would have been counted only natural indecision and instability—but you of all men!"

"Don't shame women by the comparison," Caleb said impatiently; "don't, for the sake of my mother."

"If your mother had lived," the Squire proceeded, softening into still greater tenderness, "she would have made a better handling of this business than I and my fine old Madame have done. Not that Madame Dupuy is a clumsy fool, or that I had no experience of her management, bad as English usage was against it. The old country gentry have entered into family alliances often enough, and the leaders of the society

of Methodists have proposed marriages for their members—only we called them marriages in the Lord, and not *mariages de convenance*; and I have lived long enough to know that there is a great deal in a name. You take away my breath, Caleb, but don't let us get into another monstrous misapprehension. You have taken a late fancy to this Mademoiselle, whom I always thought to be charming, bidding fair to be 'good, and fair, and learned,' eh?—as that other she I loved from the first moment I saw her—but who, when she was first proposed to you, you declined."

"Don't be hard upon me, father," pleaded the young man.

"Am I hard? But what if you should change your mind again? What if you don't know it even yet, my lad? What if this be compassion, contrition, a genteel amends to the poor young creature who has been badly dealt with by a rogue of quality, as any man with the name and feeling of a man would grant? I would not be against any fellow's being generous to a girl on

a pinch ; but this is being over-generous."

"Of course I cannot convince you, if even you choose to doubt it," asserted Caleb, while he walked up and down ; "but if you will only think to what I subject myself by this confession, and the way in which my hopes of success have been diminished by my own thickness of head and hotness of temper, you will see that it is not at all probable that I should talk myself into the vainest of passions, or get up an attachment almost certain to cover me with chagrin in the end. Is it not more credible that I should fight against it as long as I was able, and only give way to it when I could no longer keep it down, and when I judged that it was but honest to myself, and no more than her due, to say it was all my fault, and bear the penalty?"

"Yes, there is some reason in what you say," candidly admitted the Squire.

"Consider, father, that whatever motive of despair or distrust might close her mouth, it could only be because jealousy and doubt conspired to put me beside myself, that I

was driven to do what you called condemning her unheard."

"I stand corrected, Caleb," said the Squire gently; "notwithstanding I cannot get rid of my own impressions on the matter, and they don't altogether tally with your conclusions, man. But then what do you propose to do?"

Before Caleb could answer, a detachment of the Mall company bustled in with batches of bread and pots of potatoes.

"Mever mind, my lad," his father hastened to console him. "The air, even though it be somewhat boisterous, is refreshing, and before turning in for the night, I like to step across the threshold and look at the sky the last thing, were it only on account of the patriarchs standing in their tent doors and worshipping in the sudden death of an eastern day and the glorious moon of an eastern night. We have plenty of time to settle your affair before the evening exercise, Caleb. I do not think I have forgotten that my blood was young once, and prickled as yours doth now."

Caleb was reconciled to the interruption. Like most men, he could speak more freely as he strolled with his father in the court or on the terrace, or as they stood with their backs to the gable of the porch, seeing each other's faces dimly in the wavering starlight. Besides, the necessity of giving his father the support of his arm under the force of the gusty wind drew the two so closely together in their old affectionate relation, that Caleb did not hesitate to come out with another grievance which was troubling even his small amount of expectation of a happy issue to the impeded course of his true love.

“We have nothing worth offering her at the best, father. You do not suspect me of reflecting on your plan of life when I say so; what was good enough for my mother should be good enough for your son's wife. Still we cannot count on a stranger, a delicate, accomplished young woman, however good, having any stomach for becoming head schoolmistress, housekeeper of a poor-house, nurse, and what not. It would not be fit to ask her to fare as we can fare.

Though, to make a clean breast of it, it seems the only honourable step that is left to me. Mayhap I had better drop it rather than mock her with such an offer."

"Mayhap you had better, my son," acquiesced the Squire, more merrily than he had yet spoken, clinging to the care-laden Caleb, keeping his feet and piloting himself along the terrace in the wake of his son, "if she do not think your offer a worthy one after her own granddame and guardian made choice of you ; if a Huguenot's daughter cannot fare as the jewel of the Nenthorns of Stavely was proud and happy to fare, and to fill the offices which she filled well—then, in the name of common sense, call quits with the scheme."

"But, really, do you think it was ever a practical scheme, sir? Do you think it would still be possible to renew the broken-off attempt at an alliance?"

"As for that, I always understood that it was you yourself, my friend, who stood as stiff as a halberdier, and formed the insurmountable obstacle. You must give me a

little time to collect my scattered thoughts ; for if I made one master-blunder, it is like I fell into a dozen anent the question, which I might pass to you as lights and guides."

"No, no, father," insisted Caleb, "tell me what you thought, and let me judge as to the blunders."

"A humble suitor ! I like not to do it, lad, for pampering your besotted vanity," the Squire said quickly, having committed himself by a rash hint, and feeling the necessity of fighting off from an explanation.

"The vanity being so mortal already, a truce to it. You must speak out to me, sir, since you are my sole adviser," enjoined the young Squire, with eyes the sparkling of which was hidden by the night.

"Good lack ! it is a fine office," protested the Squire, still reluctant to express his convictions. "Much thanks I am like to get when she avenges herself by giving you the sack without remedy. No, no, Caleb, don't believe that ; but, in troth, I am affrighted I may mislead you."

"It strikes me, sir, that it is somewhat

late in the day for that apprehension. Come, out with your conjecture or cogitation, whatever it was."

"I ought not to betray a tender lass," alleged the Squire, becoming himself as confused as a girl.

"What have you to betray? Unless, in good earnest, you have betrayed yourself already. I can give you no peace until you follow up your intimation."

"As if you were giving me peace, you young rebel," groaned the Squire; "and my breath a'most gone with these scuds. Come into the porch again, Caleb. Well, it comes to this, that I did think the fine young Frenchwoman—fine by nature, not by art—was inclined in the beginning to look as sweet as her shyness and her self-respect would let her on my bumpkin; and it went to my heart to see her balked of her innocent maidenly fancy by no fault that I was free to charge upon anybody, but by one of those mischances of this world, the foundations of which are out of course. However, as I also imagined that you, sir, looked as

surly as the east wind on her pretty homage, I would not have you give a fig for my idle guess."

"At least, you never let me know of the suspicion," suggested Caleb, with confusion burning in his brown cheek, to which his father's was light; "not when you sounded me on my views as to marriage, and my feelings for the family at the Shottery Cottage."

"No, Caleb Gage, no more than she spoke up for herself when you wronged her; and I trust you do me the justice to credit that I would have died sooner than make such a communication to my own son, if he had not spoken to me as he has done to-night," affirmed the old man with dignity.

"Not to make me happy, father?" murmured Caleb, pressing up to him.

"You silly lad, there would have been no question of making you happy then; but only of causing a young lass, who was too good for you, to hang her head foolishly."

Then old Caleb Gage let out his satisfaction, amounting to exultation, in his son's having come round heartily to entering on

the proposal of early wedlock with Grand'mère's child, on which he had looked favourably from the first. With all the Squire's charity, he was not able to hold in very high esteem squires' daughters like Milly and Dolly Rolle, and though he doubted not that they might grow into tolerable wives and mothers at the end of a score of years, he had rather that they did not serve their apprenticeship for that period at the Mall. Such young women as they might consent to do it, balancing all young Caleb's bodily and mental endowments, and the future disenfranchisement of the Mall, against their horror of Methodism. But the struggle of warring tastes and tempers which would ensue could not be an agreeable or profitable experience, especially to the old Squire, with regard to whom the most he could hope for from one of these daughters-in-law was that she should humour and tolerate the master of the house as half a dotard and half a fanatic. And young Caleb was too loosely attached to the Methodist body not to have offended its leading members, so as to render it im-

probable that he should marry into the society. His father had therefore been sometimes visited with concern on his son's account, lest he had erred in his philanthropy, and proved improvident and inconsistent to the extent of being less than kind to his own flesh and blood, by rendering it a precarious venture for the young Squire to marry, if he resolved to do so, in his own rank of life. But Mademoiselle and her tidy little dowry solved every difficulty now, when a solitary, eccentric life had begun to loom as an imminent danger for the son of the man who held a noble woman as God's best gift, and which, granted, made every toil and sacrifice possible and easy.

True, it was uncertain whether the influential old mother who represented the Dupuys would consent to take up afresh and renew the contract at the point where the Gages had offensively stopped short. There might be a rigid French code of propriety against such fickleness. The Dupuys might have formed other projects for Yolande, and kept them private because one of their own

countrymen figured as principal in them. Or, in spite of the late outrage, the household at the Shottery Cottage might now feel themselves more settled down at Sedge Pond, and in less urgent need of allies. In their ignorance, they might not appreciate the damage done to Yolande by the little frolic of Mr. George Rolle ; and Grand'mère, the old Squire felt, was the last woman in the world to seek to hush it up and mend it by hurrying Yolande into the formerly talked-of marriage with Caleb Gage. And lastly, even the manly part which Caleb had played in the outrage, carried out as it was under a miserable and mortifying misconception, was not calculated to recommend him to tender-spirited and high-minded women like Grand'mère and Yolande.

But old Caleb Gage was nevertheless sanguine. He was ready to throw himself into the breach and bear the burden of another's conceits and vagaries. To do this for his son, who was ordinarily so wise and reasonable, that his late temper and conduct could only be accounted for by a love-dis-

turbed brain, with its heady fumes, would give him the purest delight. He would have out his nag and saddle-bags the first thing in the morning, and ride across to Sedge Pond, and be himself the bearer of the regret and repentance, the confession of hastiness and wilfulness. He would at the same time solicit and plead for the restoration of the terms which had already been laid down and shabbily treated.

In the meantime, standing in the porch in the fitful starlight, he forgot the cold and the gloom, and expounded to itching, half-amused ears what he called the "illustrious gain" which the presence of a gentle, refined, intelligent, godly woman was to a family, and the pinching loss it had been to him and Caleb to be confined for so many years, even to the best of the Libbie Larkins and the Mistress Hephzibahs among woman-kind. Not that the good creatures were not true women in their best features, but they wanted the tact, the discrimination, the rich sympathy and wide charity of his dame, and were no more to be compared to her "than

clambering peas to mantling vines." The Squire by intuition and deduction ranked Yolande among these fair, wise, virtuous women, and prophesied her eminence and the rare gift that her presence would be to the Mall, until it almost sounded as if he looked for the return of his Lucy, who had gone from him so early. In his excitement he even called Yolande by the name of Lucy, and spoke eagerly of the improvements which would be made and the progress which would be attained when Lucy should be with them.

The great bell clanged for the exercise, and the conversation of the Squire and his son was abruptly brought to a termination. The two went in with the rest of the big motley family, and sat among the company of preachers, licenced and unlicenced, the widow and the orphan, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. The Squire did not conduct the services, but only took his turn with the others as Brother Gage. But this chanced to be his night to preside. He read as his passage of Scripture the last chapter

of Job, and to the marvel and mystification of many of his hearers, he returned thanks in his prayer for a treasure which had been taken away from the Mall, and of the return of which there was good hope.

The last words the Squire said to Caleb before retiring were still full of the past and the future :


“Lad, I have bethought me of something that was your mother’s to give to Yolande. I mean her work-table. She kept that when she disposed of everything else that belonged to her, even to her harpsichord. I think she might have kept that when I kept my books, for sure noble verse is made to be wedded to sweet music, and methinks stringed instruments were constructed to compass the union, that it might sound its best to praise God withal. But my dame had not a tuneful ear, though she was in all else as many-sidedly tuneful as the wind or the waters. But see now, her Huguenot daughter might have brought the harmony of Clement Mariot’s psalms from the dumb wood and ivory, for these foreigners have a skill of

their own in harmony. . However, Lucy could put her table to use in the making of coats and garments, like Dorcas—the end to which she was thenceforth to devote her needle. Here is the key, I have kept it at my watch-guard till now, when I deliver it up to you until the day when you can make free to hand it to your dame that is to be. Had this been July, and not October, I might, French fashion, have taken a posy in my hand from you to her to-morrow, and sent you no farther than the hedges to gather it, for those women, with a right down love of flowers—and, bless you, I like the sign—don't mind though they be scarcer or no more scented than hawthorn or honeysuckle.”

The next morning, when the good Squire was called betimes to set out on a bridal errand for his son, he was found lying solemn and serene on his widowed bed, having departed over-night on a sudden journey, with the gift of the faithful remembrance and the tender admiration of his brave manhood and age in his hand, wherewith to greet his wife in the city from which there is no going out.

## CHAPTER V.

*The Squire's Last Feast.*

HE news that he who had been Squire of the Mall no longer dispensed its bounty and charity, caused no little excitement in Sedge Pond and the neighbourhood. Those who had not cared to acknowledge his acquaintanceship since he had changed his religion, as well as those who had profited by his Methodism and its institutions, regarded this as an occasion which could not be missed for repairing to the Mall to join the funeral gathering. Crowds congregated in the court and on the terrace, and streamed through all the doors, which on this day had been thrown wide open. They wandered over the house, and wondered at the transformations upon it, and passed below

the denuded pictures, where painted eyes, incapable of new light, seemed from their cold exultation to challenge the crowd as they pressed along below. But the most hostile ancestral figures did not hinder the humblest of the mourners from penetrating into the room where the coffin rested on its trestles, ready for removal, nor from reading the name and the age of the old Squire, though both were well enough known to his contemporaries. Afterwards they visited the *Academicia*, now bereft of its patron and restored to its old use. Long boards had been set in the low-roofed, dark-panelled room, to bear refreshments ; and the guests walked up to murmur a word of condolence, or silently to take the hand of the new Squire, the central figure in the gloom, as he sat there in his mourning-cloak, the representative of the house and the master of the feast.

In those days, when roads were bad and travelling difficult, when old neighbours, and even near relations, sometimes did not meet for years, the protracted ceremony,

with its attendant hospitality, was reckoned a simple act of respect to the dead, and of consideration for the living, which no person, whatever his religious or political opinions, was warranted in neglecting. People of both sexes and of all classes and ages attended such gatherings, sometimes from a mixture of motives. To some it was an opportunity for meeting company; others regarded it as a concession to the prior claims of the Great Debtor; and perhaps more viewed it as a good occasion for paying early court to the rising sun—the Squire who was to be, whose character as Squire was still to be made, and who, if he had offended any of the prejudices of his fellows as Squire apparent, had it yet in his power to make amends by reforming the errors and remedying the abuses which had existed under the old *régime*.

Various other impulses actuated the huge assemblies which gathered at funeral feasts in those days. Not the least of these was a sense of obligation to close, if possible, a generation's feuds, and thus set at rest the

qualms of conscience awakened by an old opponent's having passed irrevocably beyond the old circle of friend and foe.

And special circumstances combined to render the gathering at old Caleb Gage's burial a curiously large and motley one. The untoward state of the weather, the sudden showers of snow, fast heralding winter, did not diminish it, though it promised to render the pall and the new-made grave whiter than "the white flowers of a blameless life," which the dead man had worn. The old Squire who, in his life, had been pointed at as a fifth monarchy man out of season, a seditious revolutionist, a canting, blaspheming Methodist, like many another chief, received an ovation now, when he was no longer here either to profit or be spoiled by it. Had the Apostle Paul died when he was called mad by the Governor Festus, he might have had a notable funeral, attended not only by the empty chariots of his judges, but by some of the august magnates themselves—King Agrippa and Queen Bernice winding up the procession in the very state

with which they came to hear his accusation and defence. Men of every shade felt at last that there had been something in a high sense noteworthy and true in Caleb Gage's life of fervent faith and entire consecration to deeds of benevolence, though, in its course, it had been seen only in glimpses and fragments, and had appeared to them full of paradoxes, failures, and absurdities. Men who had never set a foot within Caleb Gage's house, or looked on his living face, travelled a dozen miles to witness his institutions, now that the testing seal of death was stamped upon them. It was as though a wonder of his age was being removed from their midst. Few near Sedge Pond knew, or could have known, of another and even greater man protesting against the racket, the hard worldliness, and worse than pagan unbelief which then prevailed,—the simple sailor, Captain Coram, who at that very time was inaugurating charities more extensive than princes had founded, and dedicating to the best service of God and of humanity the gallant life which had been spared in battle. It

was not only the eager, fervent Methodists who believed that there would be a harvest from that funeral feast, and that Caleb Gage, like Samson, would slay the Philistines in his death as in his life, and possibly more in the last than in the first, because it is an eternal law that the seed cannot be quickened unless it die. If there is any higher element in humanity, any power of receiving the Divine leaven, it was not unreasonable to hope that some who came to the Mall to scoff might remain to pray.

To not a few tenants of the Mall, Caleb Gage's funeral day was the celebration of a long farewell to the old home. True, the old Squire himself could not have been more incapable than was young Caleb, of roughly dismissing ancient guests, or having recourse to any but the most gradual method of change, since it affected those for whom his father had so laboured and suffered. But it was impossible that the Mall could continue the rallying ground and training school of the sect which it had materially helped to form. The yeomen-like preachers, who

were even now falling into knots to discuss the late Squire's interpretation of the little horn of Daniel, or the seventh vial of the Apocalypse, must come to more practical matters, and choose a new interpreter and leader.

And as much the Squire's charge, and as liable to be scattered by his death, were the young apprentice boys and girls who, set idle for the day, were half tempted to think it a holiday, since it was not in reason to expect that their round, ruddy faces could be sobered to meet the requirements of the occasion. But even here and there among them were thoughtful brows and tearful eyes.

The patient incurables—most patient of all the sick in the Squire's hospital, and the most permanently established of his family—were limping and shuffling and groping about among the company, so accustomed to human suffering and the reverses of earth, that it did not seem there could be a calamity or bereavement on which they would not turn placid, almost smiling faces. There was another class of invalids—bronzed sol-

diers and sailors, with their wounds and their scars, half subsisting on their pensions, and half on the feats of their dogs, and on their stories of land and sea fights, foreign countries, and great hurricanes. There were travelling tailors, saddlers, tinkers, glaziers, and pedlars, who ought to have been men of substance and repute, but who had lost caste, and were discarded by their more prosperous brethren. Following on their heels came the privileged beggars, the more privileged if they happened to be crazy—down to the very gipsy whose camp was pitched on the Waäste, and who, whatever his origin, was still the Canaanite among the lowest of the Israelites. But the most touching and comforting of the pictures in the rag-fair were the poor outcasts whom the Squire had been able to draw from the kennel, and had left behind him, cleansed, clothed, and in their right minds. As to the Alchemy by which he did it, one may be content with referring to certain chapters in the Bible, in which it is recorded how one sat at His feet washing them with her tears,

and wiping them with the hair of her head, until He said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" and how another was brought before Him by her Jewish accusers, to whom He turned and declared, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."

Thus were met old and young, rich and poor, man and maid, as well as matrons carrying little children, that they might be able to say in after years they had been present at the Mall on the occasion of the great funeral feast of the good Squire, whom in his day their mothers had heard called mad. Most of the people wore mourning, either in their whole attire or in rusty scraps and small touches. A favourite costume with the women was black scarves, and white gowns, emulating the snow on the ground outside, and the shroud within the coffin, as well as being significant of the hardy stoicism and determined endurance of the age.

There were two little family groups which kept somewhat sedulously apart, and yet could not quite withdraw their eyes and their thoughts from each other. At the

head of the first was the Rector, grown grey suddenly as it seemed, who had been heard saying shortly and sharply that he would not have missed this funeral feast at any price, or for any excuse. With him was Madam, wan and woe-begone in her old comely fairness and stoutness. She had dragged her feet into company and forced back her heavy tears, even on the convenient occurrence of a funeral, because it was her Philip's will to brave out and live down the dreadful misfortune which had befallen them. Dolly came after her father and mother, looking cowed and deserted, and causing the spectators to rub their eyes at sight of the familiar mantua and hat without the other mantua and hat which were wont to accompany them. The whole of the Rolles were distinguished by the absence in their dress of the mourning so generally worn. Black Jasper walked last; he was easily moved to tears, and he improved the opportunity by crying copiously. He only intermitted the operation when a hymn was raised. Then he would wipe his

eyes, hold up his head, and sing with great sweetness, and no diminution of zeal and fervour, for the trifling objection that he was unacquainted with either words or tune. His indignant master would face round upon him and order him to stop—now that blubbing, now that bellowing; and Jasper would duck his woolly head and try hard to obey, but the force of a gushing and musical temperament was too much for him, and before any time had passed Black Jasper was off again either into sobbing or singing.

The other group consisted of Grand'mère, Yolande, Monsieur (who had returned, and shrugged his shoulders at his vain pursuit of his daughter), and Mr. Hoadley, who had escaped for a moment from his hard work in moral sinks and sewers. Mr. Hoadley did work hard and unremittingly now, in a desperate attempt to make up for his former latitudinarianism, though Grand'mère would have it that he must leave the past yesterday, with its neglected duties and its many offences, as he must leave the future to-

morrow, with its anticipated cares and toils, to him who alone is sufficient for these things. Grand'mère's party was wound up by Deb Potts, who, arrayed in a huge black hood of Prie's, looked well about her, and took in everything around her. The men soon left the women—Monsieur to go on other errands, and Mr. Hoadley to join the Rectory family. Mr. Hoadley was some comfort and of some consequence to his brother churchman. He carried another flag of truce into the Methodist muster, and acted as an escort to the depressed and affronted Dolly, damaged by her sister's having gone lamentably astray. It was not that Mr. Hoadley did not rejoice like a man, and thank God like a Christian, for Yolande's deliverance, though she owed it not to him, but to another. But the fact of the young Squire of the Mall, and not Parson Hoadley's having compassed Yolande's rescue, was not without its effect in raising another barrier between her and her slighted lover. Mr. Hoadley had not been privileged to do anything for her sake but

to throw up the chaplaincy, which he ought to have resigned long before for his own. A sense of failure and incompetency where she was concerned, began to haunt and chafe him. Where was the use of his continuing to hang on the skirts of Grand'mère and Yolande, when Grand'mère herself overlooked him at the Mall, and Yolande's manner gave the impression that she did not turn her back upon him because she had no more heart or spirit to turn her back upon her greatest bane? But to Mr. Hoadley's sensitive vanity, her meek endurance was even worse than her sauciness—a thing that his honourable intentions were not fit to stand any more than his abused passion and his bigoted intolerance.

Neither Grand'mère nor Yolande so much as observed Mr. Hoadley's dejection that day; only Yolande had a passing sense that the yoke on her neck was slightly tightened. She was at the Mall again, happily lost in the obscurity of a crowd, but she recalled her past acquaintance with the place with a sick shudder. The very hymns—songs of

Zion—which Mistress Hephzibah had sung to put her to sleep on the night of her disgrace, fell on her ear full of painful associations. But those who had so sedulously entertained her before were not able to pay much heed to her now. Libbie Larkins, inconsolable because she could even so much as think of baked meats, was too much engaged. Mistress Hephzibah, in her serener atmosphere, barely noticed the young French woman, and that more out of charity than anything else, little guessing how near she had been to having her for an honoured young kinswoman.

With reverent tender regard for the trying solitude of Caleb Gage's position, and with a flood of compunction for her bearing towards him on the last occasion they had met, Grand'mère followed the stream and approached the chief mourner. With sore grief for his grief, with yearning pity that was all the more pitiful that she did not think to offer it nor dream that he would care to accept it, Yolande glided like a shadow after Grand'mère.

“We are so sorry, Monsieur, we cannot say how sorry,” declared Grand’mère, earnestly. “He was a gentleman as there ought to be—gentle. We saw him only so many times, but he was our true friend. If he had tarried here a little longer, Yolande would have sought to kiss his hands for his house’s roof; but the roof which became him was the cloudless canopy of the vault of Heaven. Monsieur, you are his son—what is our knowledge of him or our loss in him compared with yours? I presume not to lament with you.”

Caleb lifted up his grave, mournful eyes, and looked on the pair. If any thought at variance with his situation intruded itself upon him he hated himself for it, and thrust it away from him. True, his father had rejoiced in his slow and sure passion; but in the sudden rending of the first ties of nature, Caleb had suffered the natural revulsion from later ties which had been asserting their sovereignty over him and superseding the first. In the keen awakening to all that he had lost, the jealousy of bereaved affec-

tion and its generous remorse for the smallest shortcoming, Caleb, modest and single-hearted in his manliness, took himself to task for his failures in duty and love to such a father. He inwardly accused himself of having been engrossed with his wilful inclination and selfish personal interests, and with having overlooked and neglected symptoms of decay in the old Squire. He had denied his father his society and sympathy on many a day during this summer and autumn, though at the very last there had been an explanation, and full confidence had been restored between them. Caleb belonged to his dead father in the early pangs of separation, and his dull eyes could not sparkle even for Yolande. His tongue stumbled stiffly as he said that every friend of his father's was welcome at the Mall, and more welcome now than ever. He was sure Madame Dupuy was the Squire's friend (no, he could not call him the late Squire); it was kind of her to do him a grace; and he begged her to excuse his poor courtesy. The very touch of his hand was cold, and

he said to himself it was well that he was dead to other emotions, which read like vanities now that he was fatherless, even while he had a conviction that he was cutting himself off from complete reconciliation with the Dupuys, and with his own hands destroying the remnant of an intercourse which, without the Squire's ready, gracious intervention, it would be doubly hard to renew. On the other hand, if Yolande had entertained the faintest suspicion of what had been purposed, if the true love between the young man and the girl had been a happy, admitted love, with its course running smoothly, she would have asked nothing from him, but would have respected the oblivion in which he cast himself and his happiness together with her and hers—would have counted herself delicately complimented by the association—would have patiently waited and waited until she could softly recall him to his own and her claims.

As it was, Grand'mère observed, sorrowfully, "*Le pauvre fils !* We can do nothing for him. He needs us no more than if we

were *croquemorts*." And Yolande's heart died within her, and only revived that she might tell herself that she was a selfish, vain, light-minded, worldly creature. And when she had succeeded in stretching, laying out, and burying her love for the time, she could turn and listen to Charles Wesley's soaring hymn, and be inspired and borne away on its strains.

"When from flesh the spirit free,  
Hastens homeward to return,  
Mortals cry, 'A man is dead !'  
Angels sing, 'A child is born !'"

The Dupuys rode home to Sedge Pond, market-fashion, on a wall-eyed, spavined horse, hired from the ale-house, with Deb, shouldering Madame Rougeole, walking alongside, in case the beast should take to prancing and bolting under its burden. Yolande said to Grand'mère as they went,

"Grand'mère, it is white there above, and white there below, and it is we who are like black flies crawling between. Does nothing whiten us? It has been a journey of misfortune this to the Mall, *ma mère* ; we


ought never to have made it. *Petite mère*, do you think that mistakes committed on earth are cleared up in heaven? His father, saint and sage as he was, died believing me to be black, and *he* believes it, for he believes his father."

"*Ma toute bonne*," replied Grand'mère, "leave not only vengeance, but justice, to the Lord. "Oh! ça, the brightest thing about heaven is that we will see clearly there. Seest thou not thy father and mother here? They have lived together more than all thy life, and they understand one another not a bit more than they did the first day they came together. They are like planets with different orbits, the planes of which never cross. You and I, we think we understand each other, *cocotte*; and yet, if one of us were to die to-morrow, the other would be in anguish like the *gars* yonder, to find how many nooks in her own heart she had kept shut up, and how many places in her friend's she had never so much as sought to enter. Everyone liveth to himself, and everyone dieth to himself in

that sense; and, *ma foi!* we shiver, we grow bad, we grow mad in the solitude, long before we pass the great portal, if the Father be not with us. But there—above, Yolandette, we know and are known; and as the disciples of the Master would know Him no more after the flesh once they had known Him in the spirit, so shall we only begin to know our people *au fond*, and laugh at the ignorance which we called knowledge in this dim cramped *ménage* of earth, when we are free, and are no longer self-blinded, in the house of the Father.”

## CHAPTER VI.

*A Living Sorrow.*

T Sedge Pond Rectory this autumn life was sombre and shaded, notwithstanding that Mr. Philip Rolle vehemently and imperiously insisted that he and the remaining members of his family had nothing to do with his lost daughter, and should neither be held responsible for her folly nor regarded as sharers in her punishment. Stung to the quick by what he of all men could least bear with any show of equanimity,—undutifulness, levity, and vice on the part of one of the daughters he had cherished, and treachery and ingratitude on the part of one of the Rolles, whom, next to his own children, he had loved, and whose sins he had failed to denounce,—the

Rector, with all his efforts at serenity, evenness of temper, and sociability, was sterner and more austere than his household had ever known him.

The loss of Captain Philip had not so affected him. There was a tender pride in that dead sorrow, a loyal submission which brought out all that was most generous in the man and most elevated in his Christianity ; but this wanton dishonour of a living sorrow put an iron mask on his face and a heart of stone in his breast.

Madam, who for a quarter of a century had been the most dutiful and reverent of wives, as well as the fondest of mothers, was all at once drawn different ways by the ruling passions of her being. Sometimes she was tempted to think that the Rector was a merciless tyrant, and again that her miserable Milly had never been anything but a wicked baggage. And she would indulge in such thoughts until she fell into a chronically hysterical state, when she was no longer fit for her house-keeping and cookery, but wandered about pale as a ghost,

putting her handkerchief to her eyes, and wringing her hands whenever she got into a snug corner.

As for Dolly, she had never had such a fit of the dumps in all her life. In the first place, she had now some cause to be in the dumps. She deeply felt the loss of her playfellow. It was lonesome and drear for her to be day and night the only young person at the Rectory, unless, indeed, Mr. Hoadley had compassion upon her. She felt it all the more that she was forbidden to complain. Nor was this surprising. She had grown up to womanhood without any training in self-control or discretion. Now she was suddenly gagged and frightened into trembling silence and whimpering obedience by her father's single display of indignation, and his instantaneous renunciation of the offender Milly. And, moreover, there was no hope of an end to Dolly's lowness, for let her be sick, or in as pretty a passion against Black Jasper or the maids as she chose, her mamma hardly noticed her, unless, indeed, to take fits of hugging

her and crying over her, which was but poor diversion for Dolly. If she so much as dared to hint at going on a visit to a neighbour, or a ride to Reedham, or across the country after the hounds, her papa, who perhaps had forced her abroad with him only the day before, would stare, contract his brows, and answer her sharply in the negative. He would then walk up and down the room with dreadful heavy steps, and watch her jealously, till she quaked again lest he should denounce her as he had denounced Milly. These were dull days of fog and fall to Dolly; and though she was not on the brink of spasmodic rebellion like her mother, her dulness was embittered by a sullen sense of injustice. How could she help Milly turning out ill, when Milly had not taken her into her counsel, but had chosen to keep company with Ma'mselle, who had managed to get clean out of the scrape, Dolly being cut off from Ma'mselle's society also for that escape? Was she to be punished by a life of suspicion, tight discipline, and harsh gloom, for

Milly's going off with Mr. George Rolle?

The very servants at the Rectory went about their Martinmas work with the consciousness of an unspoken calamity which had befallen the house, and continued to hang over it. "For, see now," as they said, "cruel, good, clever, and determined as the Rector be, can he destroy an evil deed and its evil work by merely bidding every mother's son or daughter hold his or her tongue about it, and forget that it has happened? Can he make Mistress Milly be as if she had ne'er been, by declaring that as he has no son on earth—and he were right down thankful for it this day, for he would not have had his young heir smitten with shame, or burning to avenge a sister's stained name—so he has but one daughter now, for Mistress Milly be his daughter no more?" But could he bring that about? Could Madam's mother's heart, yearning after her child, be brought to admit that there could be an extremity which would warrant such cold-blooded wisdom? True, simple folks were bidden keep the broken

from the whole—a doctrine the Rector was for ever touching on in his sermons at this time; and, as the Sedge Pond people said, “It were like Mistress Milly was no longer a fit companion and example for Mistress Dolly, to whom she used to be as much the marrow as two new pins, and the girls as inseparable as any pair of dame’s geese, while, lawk! their lives were to run in opposite directions now, the one to light, the other to darkness. Leastways, so Pearson would have it. But to say the poor erring sinner were to be stamped into nought, as well as given over to destruction, by her own kith and kin, was less than kindness—indeed were main malicious and vindictive of Pearson in plain bodies’ eyes; might be the way of gentlefolks, but was one of those forced, unnatural ways which the commonalty could not understand.”

No, the Rector might pack his skeleton into his closet, and shut and lock the closet door before his household’s blinking eyes, but he could not insure that the door would not open of itself some day when he least

expected it, or that Mistress Milly would not return like the prodigal son, in which case he had pledged himself to receive her. Nevertheless, judging by his present conduct, it was a sorry reception which he was preparing for her; as unlike as possible to that of the prodigal. At the same time those servants of the Rector's, who, after the fashion of other servants, sat in judgment on their master, and condemned him without hesitation, were impressed by his calm front, as the firmness and self-mastery of a superior nature and a superior nurture will always command respect, if not love, and compel the mass, with its ill-regulated and demonstrative passions, to follow and defer to it.

Black Jasper was the most intractable and ungovernable of the Rector's troop under the new order of things, notwithstanding that the fellow had all the docility and fidelity of his race. He could not comprehend that his Massa's sister, and his Massa's Massa's daughter was become an outcast and alien. He would incidentally allude to her with the utmost innocence, while beside

the family, half-a-dozen times a day. He was constantly making preparations which had reference to her return. He would come in with his goggle eyes and his imperturbable composure, and ask Madam whether he had not better air the cane room for Mistress Dolly lying in it again with her sister ; whether he might go up to Farmer Spud's and seek after a pet lamb "against the young mistress's" appearance, in order to surprise her, or go out and cut rushes to stuff her church hassock with them, for she was wont to complain of it, and it was unused in the meantime.

The Rector's eyes would sparkle at these things, and in one sense they quite burnt up Black Jasper, causing him to jump from the spot on which he stood every time they flashed upon him. But they were powerless to stop his obliging *mal-à-propos* proposals. So the Rector in despair gave up attempting to cut Black Jasper short, or to show him the door in the middle of his speeches.

The Rector afforded another contradic-

tion. Behind backs Dolly rated the stolid Black Jasper soundly for his doltishness, and Madam cried out fractiously, "How can you bring forward that wretched young lady in your speeches, boy? Have you no judgment or no mercy? You may see, if you like to look, that I cannot stand it." But the Rector was rather gentler to Black Jasper, and less nettled by his solemnity and cowardice than formerly, and now indulged him more frequently by speaking to him of Captain Philip.

The frost-wind of adversity was blowing into the shrinking breast of this poor family; while the frost-wind of nature was turning black the garish heads of the great sun-flowers in the Rectory garden, and causing them to dangle dismally on their nipped stalks. The time for the sun-flowers was over, and nothing could save them; and for the family there was little shelter in the narrow cloak of pride, resolution, and stoical endurance. There was little shelter anywhere, indeed, save in the wide mantle of strong faith and meek cha-

urity, which lies waiting the use of every pilgrim, but not till his wandering foot has carried him within "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Madam would have tried to win and wear that mantle, but she was foiled and outraged by her husband's severity. The Rector could do no wrong, and yet he bade the weeping blood of a mother freeze within her breast, or turn to rankest poison. What could she do? How was she to maintain her double bond to the husband whom she had called her lord and master, and to the child she had borne, suckled, and reared? Poor wives and mothers thus rent asunder, and called by warning voices, each as loud as their own natures, to go different ways, what is left them in such tumult but to quit the hopeless, endless strife, to die and go where all feuds are reconciled, where, under the rainbow round the throne of the Great Father, all claims are blended, satisfied, and set at rest?

But Madam did not die yet. She did what she could never have believed she had

the bold spirit to do ; she intruded on her own husband, in his study, during study hours, causing him to lay down his thesis to listen to her, when she addressed him with a challenge that was almost a defiance.

“ Philip, do you mean that I am to give up my child ? ” (she no longer said “ our child. ”) “ I cannot tell whether your meaning is so bad as that, but I am come to say that I cannot—I cannot. I have let her go for a whole month, unfeeling, reckless mother that I am ! Why, the beasts of the field and the birds of the air would have risen up to succour and deliver their young. But I cannot be so unnatural any longer ; so you may lock me up, or tie me hand and foot, if you want to keep me quiet, for your word has no more power to do it. I warn you of that, Philip. ”

He raised himself and looked at her with the wonder, compunction, and consternation with which one regards a perfectly harmless, pacific nature at bay—a sheep daring the dogs for its lamb, a dove ruffling its feathers, screaming and circling between its

nestlings and the hawk. "Compose yourself, Milly," said the Rector, trying to reassure Madam, and addressing her by her Christian name, which he had not taken within his lips lately, choosing to employ instead the terms "wife," "dame," "mistress," and with a little irony, "lovey," and even that title of "mother," "mamma," which he was lending the force of his absolute, intolerant man's will to make a crown of piercing thorns to her. "If it will be any comfort to you to know," he proceeded, "that I have not let our lost child go without some poor security for her, or been able to let slip entirely what it is no longer anything but misery to remember—stay, I did not want to wound you afresh—here is a note which I had at the outset from my lady, and she will keep her word; I never knew her fail in that, either for good or evil." He finished with a groan, and taking a crumpled-up note from his pocket-book, spread it out on the table and drew Madam forward to read it over his shoulder.

"Philip," the note ran, "I do not come

near you in this horrible misfortune with an utterance of my grief, disgust, and wrath—far less with apologies and excuses, which would only be so many gross insults. But I come to remind you that the villain is my son, though I say it to my undying confusion. You know, thanks to my late lord's remorse, that I can buy and sell this fellow where he stands, strip him of his lollypops of art and fashion, and send him to rot in jail. He shall either stop short in this heinous offence against you, and undo it, if it be possible, or he shall repair it with the best he has to give. You may rely on me, Philip, as sure as my name is Audrey Rolle."

"Oh! why did you not show me that before?" remonstrated poor Madam, in excited, quavering accents. "Why was I not told that my lady's powerful interest was engaged for my child?"

"I crave your pardon, Milly," answered the Rector, still without anger at his unlimited authority being thus suddenly called in question. "I fancy I thought there were

no bounds to your trust in me. I hated to speak of the calamity: it is like touching the withers of a galled, snorting horse—remember that, Mamma. And it was no such comfort either. It was not like the Shottery Cottage folk having the glad assurance of their lass back, uninjured, within an hour or two, the moment she could shake herself free—nothing of the sort. Our wrong-headed, abandoned girl would not accept salvation. What can my lady do, though her will were ten times as all-powerful and unwavering? Patch up a flawed and cracked worldly credit,—which I am not convinced I am playing the honestest and manliest part, the part most becoming a Christian and a clergyman, in even passively consenting to.”

Madam was easily appeased for any wrong done to her own rights, and almost as easily buoyed up by a slight flutter of hope for Milly. Besides, she had a pledge of her own, lying in her pocket, and about to be brought to light, the receipt of which, the day before, had stirred her up to make

her unprecedented attack upon the Rector.

“Do you know, Papa,” asserted Madam, in a little wilful delusion, and with a little spite, perhaps pardonable in the circumstances, “I cannot think that girl from the Shottery Cottage was so little to blame as they make her out to be? They have so much guile, after all, the best of these foreigners; they can slip out of scrapes, and leave simple, silly lasses, like my poor Milly, whom their French fashions have misled in the first place, to bear all the brunt. I have had a letter, too, from Mr. Lushington, letting me know where the unhappy child has taken refuge. Don’t be angry with me, Philip, for withholding it twenty-four hours, since I dared not show it you till now.”

His honour gave honour where honour was due, so that his pothooks started with the words “Honoured Madam.” He then proceeded in no dishonourable or unfriendly spirit to say he was happy to inform her, now she was in trouble about her daughter, that Mistress Milly had sustained no serious wrong, and was in safe keeping. He

could speak with authority, for, knowing “our Mr. George’s stages,” he had himself gone early on a day following a night that she wotted off straight to the Barley Mow, on the White Cotes Road, and there he had found “my gentleman” not able to stir for his bruises and broken bones, from the place where he had been laid down by his body-servant Harry, and “there were ne’er a word of one madam, let alone two,” but Mr. George was crying like mad the moment he heard tell of the butler’s arrival. Mr. Lushington should but bide a stirrup-cup, and then start post-haste to take Mr. George’s reply to three billets which had come to him at the inn. They were all marked “speed,” and all “required an answer.” The first was from Rolle, to give his brother note that a certain fine lady, a bird of Mr. George’s own feather, for whom he would give all the country cousins and foreign traders’ daughters that ever stepped, was to be at a certain great house on a certain day; and “our Mr. George,” he would neither be to hold nor bind, if he were not

up and about again in time to join her, especially if she got word of what had kept him. Mr. Lushington was to vow for Mr. George that, sure as the clock, he was to be there.

The second letter was delivered by a groom of Colonel Berkeley's, who was riding home from the Norwich boxing match, and had dropped in to drink a cool tankard, and leave a line to say that my Lord Coke's man, the bruiser on whom Mr. George had bet, had grown dizzy and dropped in the first round, affording some fresh sport in bets as to whether he were fairly done for, or only floored for that fight, to decide which properly no doctor had been allowed by the gentlemen to touch the man for a full quarter of an hour. However, Colonel Berkeley would thank Mr. George to settle his little affair by the bearer, or as soon as ever he could make it convenient, for the Colonel had his own book to square.

Lastly, as it never rains but it pours, Mr. George had a reminder from my lady that she left him alone to deal with the French

Ma'mselle and her friends as he thought fit, though it did not seem a mighty gallant exploit to wage war with two psalm-singing women. It was no business of hers, and she had already taken them all to witness that she washed her hands of it. But if he did not conduct his insulted kinswoman Milly Rolle back to the Rectory in all honour, without the loss of an hour, or else procure a license, summon some fellow in orders, and be married to his cousin on the spot, she should not allow him to darken her doors again, nor should he have a farthing of her money. If he should venture into her presence, without her leave, to appeal against her sentence, she would go that very day before a magistrate, demand protection from her own son, and swear that her purse, plate, and jewels, if not her life itself, were in more danger from him than from any housebreaker or highwayman, and George Rolle knew whether or not she would be as good as her word.

But of all the contents of the epistle, for which Mr. Lushington craved Madam's par-

don—admitting ingenuously that it was as heavy a spell for her to have read thus far as for him to have writ—what concerned Madam and his Reverence most was, that they at the Rectory were not keener to get their young lady safe, and without notice, out of Mr. George's keeping, than he, Mr. George, was to be quit of her. Madam would understand that Mr. George had paid his cousin every respect, for Mr. Lushington would say, though it might sound a contradiction in terms, that if a Rolle had gone nearer to ruin a woman, he would have stood firmer by her ; if he had been a world crueller, he would have been a deal kinder ; but pity him for such kindness ! Now Mr. George would not rest till he had sent Mr. Lushington helter-skelter after my lady to inform her of his accident, and to swear that Mistress Milly was under the care of an honest landlady till Mr. George should apprise the Miss that he had grown discreet for her sake, and declined the honour of her company any farther, being minded to dispatch her home by any mode she might prefer.

At the first brunt of the offence the young mistress was afeard to face the friends whom she had deeply affronted, and begged to be forwarded instead to the family of an old school-fellow fifty miles on the other side of Reedham, to which she was sent with all care; Mr. George and Mr. Lushington having to plead ignorance that, in her selfish, childish panic, she had not consulted with any of her friends on this step. She had made out her story so as to meet and explain away the surprise felt by the family at her sudden visit. They had been satisfied at first, but a week later they had got an inkling of the mischief into which Mistress Milly had run, and from which she had come fresh to them. Indignant at the deception which had been practised upon them, and at the odium they might have incurred from receiving a compromised guest, they had refused thenceforth to believe any part of Mistress Milly's story, and with very little ceremony had bundled her off as far as Reedham. There the culprit, more sensible than she had yet been of the

error which she had committed, and more alarmed than ever at the idea of meeting her papa, had bethought herself of deferring the evil day while her little stock of pocket-money lasted, and of seeking quarters at the "Rolle Arms," of which Mr. Lushington, in pursuance of an old intention, had become mine host. The end of it was that Madam and the Rector might depend upon Miss being seen to, quietly and "very genteel," till they should claim her, or make known their will concerning her.

"And why on earth, Milly, did you not instantly make known the receipt of this information?" cried the Rector, even more moved by Madam's missive than she had been by his. "It is of the first consequence," he went on; "like a reprieve from capital punishment. Did you not think, woman, that it would be the gladdest news I had ever heard?"

"I did not know that you would be so much pleased to hear that the child had been treated as the Hancocks have thought fit to treat her;" and here Madam hesitated

with an accent of reproach—"and my news is not four-and-twenty hours old, Philip, while yours is six weeks of such languishing as I hope never to live through again."

The Rector made a gesture of impatience.

"What jumble of guilt, and the consequences of guilt, you women make, that you could fail of such knowledge!—that you could confound the appearance with the reality, and the mortal pain which the last inflicted! Is it ignorance or innocence, as the man says? Or is it from a foreshadowing of the divine pity, which is ready to condone all offences for the sake of the offender? It doth pass my comprehension, Milly; but this statement, which neither we nor the world have any reason to doubt, blessedly alters the whole matter."

"Then we will at once have the poor, infatuated, forsaken thing back among us again, Philip. My poor dear girl, think how she must have suffered! I dare swear she made no false representation, or told so much as a fib, to these Hancocks, of whom she was always over-fond—to trust them

before me ! But she could not tell what she was doing, and the mean, pitiful wretches rejoiced over her downfall, and were fain to persecute and cast out my unhappy darling."

The Rector looked up from a brown study into which he had fallen, with a startled, offended, stern face once more.


"No more of this, dame ; don't go to abuse innocent folk, in good truth abused enough already. Have done with such weakness, and selfishness, and crying injustice, when your own child is concerned. The girl has gone grievously astray in will, if not in deed : in sheer folly, it may be, but that is the more reason she should be brought to a sense of her folly. Had the worst that could have happened befallen her, she would not have wanted the lesson from us so much ; for, sure, the lamentable sin and degradation would have brought its own bitter punishment. But now, after working scandal in a clergyman's household, and bringing herself to the very brink of shame, she will think she has done no harm, and be not a whit abashed nor a whit improved, but go on to

compass more giddy romping and gross imprudence. I tell you I will not have it. Bring her back to the Rectory at once, and scot-free, quotha? A pretty instance of discipline to set before my parishioners, and before that little goose of ours, her sister Dolly! How comes it, I wonder, that we have so much more senseless children than other people's? Ah, I am aware Philip was a pear of another tree, but he grew as he hung, out in the world, far from our espaliers, which is no compliment to our training. But bring this extremely wrong-headed and reckless young woman—whose greater reproach for her improper behaviour is that she is a daughter of mine—under this roof again without her undergoing a sharp probation, and affording security for her modesty and obedience in future—no, verily," the Rector went on, indignantly, but, seeing his wife's blank disappointment and vexation, he turned, took her hand, and said kindly, "Nevertheless, Milly, let us not cease to be everlastingly grateful that redemption is possible." However chagrined and mortified

Madam was, she could not find it in her heart to contend any longer with the Rector, even had she not returned on the instant to all her old allegiance, believed the Rector must be right, and been convinced that further contention was not only useless but impossible.

## CHAPTER VII.

*An Unfortunate Young Lady.*

HE affair ended in Milly's undergoing a species of rustication not uncommon when girls were treated like naughty children, and children were put into corners and looked into dark closets. Milly was not allowed to come within six miles of home. She was boarded with an old nurse, who had married Farmer Spud, at Corner Farm, on the edge of the Waäste. Until she should prove that she was sorry for her bold trick, and was prepared to be quiet and careful in future, she should not be allowed to enjoy the dignity and comfort of home and the society of Dolly. But Milly did not arrive very readily at this becoming frame of mind. The Rector had conjectured shrewdly as to the effect of her bad conduct

on her mind, and took care that in the arrangement for disposing of her on trial she should have no personal interview with any member of her family. She got into a pet at the way in which she was treated, and let them know plainly that she wanted to see none of them, till they should choose to put her on equal terms with them again. She would not have her sister Doll come to Corner Farm to crow over her, and look down upon her. What had she done except have a bit of frolic, such as anybody would enjoy if they could, and such as anybody but her severe papa would have passed over lightly, more particularly as it had come to nothing? She would hold her head as high as any of them yet.

The Rector, or at least Madam, fondly hoped that a few weeks' banishment in mid-winter, to the humble, homely Coventry of Corner Farm, would break Milly's refractory spirit, tame her froward temper, and teach her to gratefully accept her father's grace on any terms. In the meantime, both the Rector and Madam could depend upon

Dame Spud and her yeoman husband as being trustworthy jailors, sensible and reasonably kind people of their rank; while Madam relieved her yearning love, and helped to defeat her own purpose, by surreptitiously supplying the owners of the farm with a hundred comforts and delicacies. These Milly took sullenly, without observation or acknowledgment; indeed, she grumbled loudly at the absence of others, which were not within Madam's power to lend out.

Grand'mère all the while looked askance at the English practice of forgiveness, coupled with such an ordeal.

“Said I not the pastor was like Jean Calvin? *Si!* but such an act as this was not in the politics of Jean Calvin; this is ‘from the Turk to the Moor.’ Jean Calvin locked up a woman for wearing the hair *en boucles*, and a man for reading romances! Yes! but the culprits were malcontents; they refused to desist; it was not without seeking to bring them to renounce their offences, when the legislator would have par-

doned them as freely as the summer wind blows about the corn. Not a man on earth was more generous to a penitent than Calvin. But this English half-and-half mode, this saying, on the right side, ‘Seest thou, I grant that thou art risen and gone from the post of rebellion, or that thou wishest well to do so, and I pardon;’ and on the left, ‘It is true, thy sword is thrown down, and thou art at my feet, but still I dare not trust thee until I punish’—it answers not; it serves only to harden; the game is not worth the candle, while simply to cancel the debt might awaken compunction and win devotion. Ah! my child, dost thou remember the beautiful story of the lord who frankly forgave his servant all the debt that he owed him? This version is as if the lord had said, ‘I frankly forgive the one-half, but for the other, thou must bear the consequences, and I shall deal them out in what will seem like a lurking grudge against thee.’ People must be the one thing or the other—judges to condemn, or kings to confer mercy, and not a part of both, with both

parts spoilt; unless, indeed, it be as the pastor preaches, that the broken must be kept from the whole. Truly, that is a solemn truth, which the broken, who are also broken in spirit, as well as the whole, who preserve their purity in meek fear and trembling, will never deny. But God be praised, here is no question of broken, but of a foolish, spoilt child, happily rescued, in His mercy, from the imminent peril into which she had run.

At last Madam from the Rectory compelled her sore mother's heart to submit to circumstances. She lowered her colours, made an errand to the Shottery Cottage, and sought a private conversation with Madame Dupuy, mère. She begged her to go and see the culprit, comfort her in the first place, and remonstrate with her in the second. "Do, dear old Grand'mère; Philip will not be angry with you for going, you do not come within his forbidden family. I'm sure he'd liefer you went than stayed. It ain't so far, and I'll lend the coach for the ride any day. Think what a pleasure

it will be for the poor soul to see a face she knows, shut up as she is yonder at Farmer Spud's in the depth of winter. If it had been summer, there might have been cowslip-picking, and hay-making, and 'the hole,' and the rustics might have been better borne with, though even then my Milly had no turn for country pleasures, that I could ever find out, unless as an excuse for junketing with young people like herself. Oh me! to think of what my innocent love and darling hath come to—for she is innocent, Grand'mere, of everything but wilfulness and heedlessness, and perhaps a spice of vanity, in going with Mr. George—a villain to make so light of her! It seems just the other day that she was such a pretty baby in a robe and cap, which I was so proud to work for her, though they ate up three months of my precious time; but the Rector did not think it wasted, not he. He said if a bride was permitted to delight herself in her jewels, much more a mother in making her child dainty by her deft and patient fingers, so that she did not forget

and neglect other poor children; and Philip, my brave little boy, was so fond of his pretty little sister; and now all that is mortal of him lies mouldering in an American wilderness, and she is sent away in disgrace to Farmer Spud's. The Rector says we ought to praise God that she is in no worse quarters; but I do not always see how that may be, for I can hardly credit that any Mr. George among them could have been monster enough to harm Milly farther than by playing on her fine spirit, and on the giddiness of chits like her—one sees them grow sober and steady enough before long—but few are so good as the Rector. However, you are not under a good-man's control, my dear old Madame—that is, your worshipful son, though he has come to middle age, and may be regarded as the head of the house, doth not seem ever to contradict you. I do not understand it, for I have always been accustomed to men of masterful minds; but by your leave I crave to take advantage of it, since I do not hear tidings of my unhappy girl

from other than Molly Spud, who sees nought but that she ain't starving herself to death, and don't sit up or walk about of nights. That is mighty fine news; but, bless you, it is not all, and if I don't hear more, I vow my heart-strings will crack."

"A thousand times; I shall go this evening, or to-morrow morning,—when you will," said Grand'mère, with the flush of her abounding goodness kindling up her face. "Yes, it is true, my Hubert does not contradict me; he trusts me like that! It is not good that the hen should crow before the cock, but it is the fashion of French sons to hang the sword to the crook where the mothers are concerned, and when hard words are spoken of *ménages de Paris*, it is but what you call fair, Madam, that this mode of the sons should be remembered in their favour."

"And may I come, Grand'mère?" asked Yolande, half pleadingly, half deprecatingly, as the old woman was preparing for her visit. "You cannot ride without me, *ma mère*. Is it not so? You will have ache

of the tongue with keeping it still when you see all the novelties of the road ; or you will forget, and begin to talk like a mill to the crows and the leverets, and the coachman will think you a *pecque*. You know all that, *ma mère* with the golden mouth, quite fine ! Grand'mère, but I will not have it that the golden mouth should be mute as a *mitaine* on a rare ride, or be mistaken for the mouth of a poor senseless monster of a *folle*. Then that poor Milly, Grand'mère, what think you ? Will she wish to see me ? Will she think I come to triumph over her for my superior wisdom ? Will she believe I stay away to show her my contempt ? Which do you think ?”

“ *Plain pied, donzelle*, I believe it is we who will suffer in the interview, and not poor Milly. The child is not wise, is no better than she can help ; she is not tender, nor thin-skinned, save where the question is of her pride, her will, her pleasure. The hand of man has not humbled her, and, mark me, it will need the hand of God to do that. They speak much of the hardness,

the coarseness, and the spiritual selfishness of the Pharisee; and that is well. They speak much of the softness, the delicacy, and the unselfishness of the sinner; and I think that is not well. It is the Israelite indeed who is mild, noble, and generous, but the sinner only a little morsel more so than the Pharisee. Do I not love the sinner? My God help me! I am a sinner myself—a great sinner for my years, my opportunities, my lessons. But because I would love the sinner, it is necessary that it be for her proper *beaux yeux* that I see her exactly as she is, hard, coarse, selfish in all ranks, conditions, and degrees of sin. You will see. We will visit Miss Milly—you will redden as the fire, and, for me, I shall redden as the turkey-cock; *tiens!* she will not have more pink than the rose. You will weep like a cascade, and I shall blow my nose, while she will be as dry as the great road on a day in summer, and as cool as a *carrefour* in one of our forests, or as the well of St. Benoite. You will be timid as a wet hen, she will be brave to the three

hairs. Ah, well! she will be a great deal the sorrier spectacle, and the more to be pitied, if it be with her as it has been ordinarily with the sinners whom I have known before, than if she reddened and wept. Then she might not need us, and we should only be in the way if she had already opened the door to the great and good guest, the Master, the King, who had come in to sup with her, and her alone."

So Yolande went with Grand'mère in the winter afternoon. They left their coach on a by-road, which threatened the younger with a repetition of her overturn, and the elder with a general fracture of her bones, brittle with age. As it was, there was urgent demand both for Yolande's arm and the assistance of Madame Rougeole before Grand'mère could climb the rugged path from the Waäste, the only road to Corner Farm, slippery with ice.

Corner Farm was a humble house, built of unhewn stones, with a thatch roof, and windows four panes square, which looked into a cattle-shed, a sheep-pen, and a pig-sty

—a place at which a girl like Milly Rolle, if she had ridden across to it, to call for her old nurse, would, the moment Dame Spud's back had been turned, have held up her hands and cast up her eyes in horror. At the same time she would have exercised her lungs every time she had crossed the threshold by screeching in imitation of the plovers and snipes on the Waäste, at every colt and heifer she had encountered, and she could not have gone far without meeting specimens of Farmer Spud's stock, in the centre of which he lived, like an ancient patriarch or a modern squatter. Even Grand'mère, who had been accustomed to southern cottages in their own luxuriant, mellow-toned home-growth of maize, vines, gourds, and almond trees, shrank a little from the bleakness and desolation of this moorland farm. As Madam at the Rectory had said, it might in summer have had some homely attractions, with the cowslips and hay faintly struggling for existence among gorse and heather. But in mid-winter the Waäste was a howling wilderness, and the few culti-

vated fields were Waästes in their turn, while the cattle, sheep, and pigs were huddled together in the yard, foddered with rotting straw and rushes, and fed on half-gnawed turnips and house refuse. The steep road was a miry trail of black mud, or a succession of jagged impressions of hob-nailed shoes as hard as iron, like a new class of fossils. Corner Farm at this season was not far from being as bad as Siberia to a pampered, empty-headed, and weak girl. Yet it was not without its substantial advantages. It was weather-tight, and as clean within as scrubbing could make it; and it was held healthful when the breath of cattle was counted not a poisoner but a sweetener of air. Farmer Spud and his wife were well-to-do people in their line. There was no want of the necessities of life, of native wooden chairs, stools, and bed-frames, checked draperies and coarse linen, as well as of plenty of plaiding and carpet bed-furnishings, deep yellow and red earthenware, besides the surreptitious and supplementary contributions from the Rectory. And at that

time, many a vicarage and parsonage was not much better supplied.

Yolande, with Grand'mère on her arm, knocked long and loud at the solid oaken door, and had plenty of time to inspect the stock, divided from them only by hurdles, and sometimes not by that. Dame Spud was in the back premises, where her clatter among pots and pans, and her deafness, combined to prevent her hearing them. The visitors, however, could distinguish Milly sitting opposite them, before one of the little windows. She remained like a statue, without offering to move, in order to greet them, or to let them in. At last, Farmer Spud, an elderly man, fresh-coloured like a winter apple, and arrayed in a long vest and knee breeches, issued from a shed. He pulled his forelock and said to Grand'mère and Yolande, "Ye be come to see the young leddy, and welcome." But to every word they answered, he said "Anan," only adding an assurance that "t' good wife 'ud trade with them." He then ushered them into the house, calling in lusty tones, "Moll,

Moll, ye wench; ye be right down wanted by gentle folks of young Madam's litter." Molly appeared hastily, with her face withered and yellow, in her flannel hood. She wiped her hands on her striped woollen apron, and the moment she entered Miles went out, as if he were but a companion weather-cock, no longer wanted on the stage. Molly, in the character of an old nurse and confidential servant, was not unskilled in cautious reserves and judicious asides. She chose to treat her former young mistress as having been in a general way ailing, so as to have had a change of scene resorted to by her friends, on her behalf, as part of her cure. All Molly's speeches were *doubles entendres*, bearing apparently on Milly's bodily health, but really on her mental mood. "Mistress Milly be getting stout again, that she be; but Norwich weren't built on one day; noa, noa, she will not stir to the door yet—not to see the milking, which she were fond of looking at as a babby—but that will come in time. She is able to divert herself most days with her

thread-papers, as Madam, her mother, will be mighty glad to learn, for the head and the heart ain't none of them over bad when a miss can settle to make thread-papers."

Milly was in the act of making her thread-papers,—cutting down strips of gaudy cardboard, painted with staring flowers, birds, and butterflies, and pasting them together in the requisite shape. She was even more elaborately dressed than usual. She had long gloves and a fan lying beside her, while her slippered feet rested on a square of rag carpet, and a leathern screen stood at her back. She rose and executed a dignified curtsy,—such a *salut de jeune fille* as Grand'mère had never beheld before,—without blushing in face or trembling in figure, and said "Good day to you, ladies," in a confident, careless tone.

Grand'mère was excited, fatigued, and ready to drop into the chair which Dame Spud offered her. Yolande had known so few friends that she could not forget this Milly, now in a sort of solitary confinement, doing penance for her delinquency. But

Milly seemed to have forgotten the former friendship, or not to recognize that there had been happier times. She was bent on putting a bold face on matters, and carrying them with a high hand, while she did not lend herself in the least to Dame Spud's manœuvre, but proclaimed loudly, with a taunt in her accent, that she had never been better in her life, and that she was as strong as a dairy-maid. She stared Grand'mère and Yolande full in their disturbed, confused faces. She laughed and talked noisily, though she took care not to drop a syllable which bore upon the Rector, Madam, or Dolly. So far from Grand'mère having "to make conversation on the point of a needle," she could barely get in a word to tell Milly how M. Landre, and many French men and women, tinted thread-papers, and made a decent livelihood by it. Milly did not really care for thread-paper flowers and butterflies, any more than for the originals. The only symptom, if it could be called a symptom, of consciousness which she gave, was sundry little snarls and snaps at the singleness of

heart which had rendered Yolande her dupe, and at the presence of mind and intrepidity which had enabled Yolande to free herself from the plot which, falling to pieces, had brought grief to Milly. "You need not be so glib in giving your opinion, Ma'mselle" (Yolande was not giving it); "you know you cannot see for your nose the very road you are travelling. You are not so much a girl of parts as of prodigious luck, when you can ride away, at a moment's notice, in the middle of the night, with young Squire Gage, and not a dog wag its tail at you for it."

Yolande was confounded and altogether dispirited by her visit. "Grand'mère," she protested, the moment the two were in the coach, "did you ever see such a change? It might have been *de coq-à-lâne* with Milly when she was simply young and gay, but now it is from brass to adamant."

"Until the next time, my dear," nodded Grand'mère, reassuring Yolande. "She is what I expected. I have seen characters much worse than a poor foolish girl braving

her folly out without a smile of the heart, but with *crispations* of the nerves to keep up the rôle which she is overacting furiously. I have seen a sinner *comme il faut, gentille*, a penitent by design and premeditation, as our women of quality were wont to wind all up, according to rule, by becoming, on a set day, *devouée*. Oh, Yolandette, profession is so abominably easy—above all, when it is to profit the professor—that even the professor may cheat himself. I say not, reject him; for who art thou that judgest? But shall thy heart tremble to its core for a fellow-mortal? Shalt thou, if love divine were not an abiding miracle, give up such a one in despair? Let it be then when thou listenest to an easy penitent, a fluent confessor and abjurer of his sins, a huge promiser of reformation!”

That visit was the first of many visits which Grand'mère and Yolande paid to Milly during her exile at the Corner Farm. For a time there seemed no door of the girl's heart which was not locked and barred against both them and her kindred, the

more surely that her own fault was the great bolt and barrier. Her reception of them was bravado ; she would not let them come to close quarters with her, would not let Grand'mère say "her say." "*Ma fille*, we are all sorry and suffering in your sufferings. We all forgive as we hope to be forgiven. Will you not be reconciled to us, as we all trust to be reconciled to God?" Milly would not let Yolande cry, "Milly, we were happy once, when we only liked each other a little, when we had only a little gaiety, good-humour, and girlishness between us. At present we have wrong, strife, sadness between us. Alas! that it should be so! But shall we not love each other much, and be as happy as the angels, if we put all these things away from us, without asking any questions, and be Milly and Yolande again, beginning anew by being good girls, and helping each other to be better?"

In the end, as Grand'mère kept firmly to her resolution not to preach until Milly would be preached to, Milly gradually dropped her mask, and showed herself

wounded, resentful, wretched. She had “run with the footmen,” and they had wearied her, how then could she “contend with the horses?” And if in “the land of peace,” wherein she had trusted, they had wearied her, then how would she do in “the swelling of Jordan?” Milly had sense to know that she had made the change in her lot for herself; and that she had been restless and discontented even when she was a petted child, a flattered young mistress, with Dolly for a companion princess, and Madam their mother for their first subject, with fair prospects and a fine prince to be met, either at the Castle or at the Rolles’ town house, for her portion in the future. Now she was sent away from home to a miserable hovel, as Milly in her indignation called Corner Farm, with no company save a good-man and his wife. Nobody came near her except the French family, whom she had cheated, but who had got the better of her at last. Her fair prospects were spoilt, her fine prince would not have a gift of her, —rather had ridden away, and dismissed

her with scant ceremony after she had served his whim. And she had brought all her reverses upon herself. Her papa might never receive her at home again, or if he did, she might not be taken out into company, so that his reception would not signify very much. She could not run off any more, for the very good reason that she had nobody to run off with; neither was she a good hand to plan and carry through an elopement. Mr. George had managed it all before, and her friends "had taken good care that she should not have so much as half-a-guinea to keep her pocket with."

Milly tossed her thread-papers into the fire, and sat twirling her thumbs in dire monotonous gloom, like any helpless doting old man or woman, until Grand'mère began to fear for her reason, and set Dame Spud and her good-man to watch their charge by turns night and day, because of those dismal tragedies of horse-ponds and trees, and lying down to sleep the last sleep in solitudes like the Waäste, which were then often enough heard of.

One day, as Grand'mère was parting from Milly, she cried for a boon, though it was only that her little dog Pickle might come to her. "He will not think shame of me: I have not hurt him. Let me have something near me that I used to care for, and that cared for me, before my friends gave me up."

So Pickle was sent to her; and Milly fondled and spoke to the little creature, as he crept into her lap, licked her hands, and whined with joy for the re-union; and every sight and touch of him did her good. "Only a silly little dog," Molly often heard her murmur; "it knows no better; it is no wiser than I—to reproach, despise, shun, and forget me. It is mighty fine, but mighty foolish, of you, Pickle, to behave so very genteelly to your old mistress, who has lost her title even to a little wretch of a lap-dog's regard."

The next time Grand'mère came Milly flung herself on the old woman's shoulder, and opened the very flood-gates of her heart.

"Oh! Grand'mère, why am I punished so much more than other girls who have behaved no better than I?"

“You find? How bitter that is!” sympathized Grand’mère, with the utmost compassion. “My child, it is not the being more punished, it is not that you have not done worse than other girls; life was wrong before you committed this trespass, these ten, twenty years, since you were born. You have not been a happy girl, Milly—not so happy as you might have been—not so happy as my Yolande, and she is an exile like myself; and we have our cares and troubles—yes, indeed, our cares and troubles. You could not die to-morrow, and say farewell to the world in peace, as Yolande could.”

“I wish I could. Oh! mercy! Grand’mère, I almost wish I could.”

“But no, you cannot, unless you say, This suffices. What am I but a poor, ignorant, sinful girl? And it is not that I have not sinned to be punished, but that I have done nothing save sin since I came into the world, and deserve nothing save punishment at Thy hands. *Mon Dieu*, is this the reason why our Lord and Saviour did and suffered Thy will? If I believe

that, I shall have a load lifted from my heart—I shall bow down in adoration—I shall look up and smile and sing. More than that, I shall say, ‘Thy will be done for all my small suffering.’ More than that, I shall say, ‘Lord, with the help of Thy Holy Spirit, I, even I, who have lived for nothing but myself and vanity, and the flesh and the devil, I shall do Thy will.’”


“Oh, Grand’mère, I will try. I have done with myself; I am sick of serving myself. If I sought to serve another, and that other—oh, Grand’mère!—God himself—would He help me? would He do it for Christ’s sake, who died for sinners? I have not to be taught that, Grand’mère. Sure, I am a Christian, and my papa is a good clergyman; but I want something to make me free to live and die a life and death worth having. Will you teach me, Grand’mère? You shake your head. Yolande, then; though she cannot be so wise as you? No! Who?”

“God himself will teach his silly, wayward, sinful child; He will lead her, and

bear with her. Christ will carry her case before the throne, as He carried her offences in His body on the tree. The Holy Spirit will come down and dwell with her, and make her frail body the temple of the Holy Ghost; and all if Milly Rolle will only ask for it. Milly may have heaven from God for the asking."

## CHAPTER VIII.

*“Stone Walls do not a Prison make.”*

ILLY had opened her heart to a new influence, very different from any that had been in it before. And this influence worked like all other influences which are of God, whether it be the quickening and growth of a seed of grain, or the call and obedience of a human heart. In the case of Milly Rolle there was not the same striking outward manifestation of grace as in the case of the rough livers of Sedge Pond. Their conversion took place at a great crisis—a time of trial and refreshing; and so their transformation from brutal indulgences and the brutal expression of foul thoughts to something higher and purer was very apparent. They were men and women ex-

isting in the primitive state and of the primitive stuff which melts like the rock before the fire, and, cleansed as by fire, comes out of the furnace strangely clean and soft, and pours itself out in floods of elevation and ecstasies of thanksgiving. The conversion of Milly Rolle from self-will to God, from frivolous worldliness to spending her life for her Father and her brethren, was as real, but it could not in the nature of things be so conspicuous or so demonstrative. She was conscious of her want, nay, more, she was contrite for her waste, and she earnestly wished and hoped to do better. She believed with all her heart that one reason why the Lord and Saviour of men had died, was simply to bear her penalty, and to enable her to do better. And all this because God's love had shone upon her in her desolation, and shown her how good, wise, and tender He was, and how bad, foolish, and regardless of Him she had been. Therefore she came to Him now, and cried unto Him, because He was her earliest, her latest Friend, her Creator and her Father, the

beginning of her life and the end of her being.

But with all these faint quiverings and pulsations of a new life beyond herself and yet within herself, Milly was the old Milly still. She was still weak, and not over wise, and encumbered with old ignorances and affectations, which had become a second nature to her. She began to be sorry, and in her sorrow to have some hope, faith, and charity. She began to pray, and to feel inclined to ask her father's and mother's forgiveness in place of refusing to forgive them. She was even inclined to be a little grateful to Farmer Spud and his dame, for their cordial good-will and assiduous services, as well as to be kind to Grand'mère and Yolande, and glad to welcome them to Corner Farm. And she gave the best proof of all by taking Grand'mère's advice, and trying to work a little, and to be interested in her work, whether it were at thread papers or helping Molly with her coarse patching and darning. She took some pleasure in praying, and in going through a chapter of the Bible.

But it is the will of God to rear and train men and women, as he rears and trains animals and plants, by slow degrees and by successive stages. The Corner Farm life was still the extreme of dulness and mortification to Milly Rolle. She could not help moping and writhing, though now only at intervals, and not without calling herself to account for it, and struggling against it. The Rector was a tenacious man, who patiently carried out his purposes, and exacted from himself every jot and tittle of their fulfilment, else he would have put an end to Milly's probation on the first symptom of her amendment. As it was, he kept her at the Corner Farm till the expiry of the term which he had fixed upon for her banishment, and till the scandal of her running away had blown over in the parish and neighbourhood. He did not trust himself to go near her, lest he should be overcome. He only relaxed so far as to allow Dolly to go to her sister. Dolly stared shyly at first, and then sat hand in hand with Milly longer than they had ever sat before. Then the

culprit had interviews with Madam, when she ran into her mother's arms and lay there. Mr. Hoadley, in his new life of a devoted priest caring for all his flock, overlooked not this young member who had stumbled and gone out of the way, whose knees were feeble, and whose hands hung down. Nor was he interdicted in his ministry when he solemnly asked the Rector's permission to exercise it upon the wanderer. At first she shrank from Mr. Hoadley's counsel as being a fresh humiliation, but afterwards she thought better of it, and not only accepted it as part of her penalty, but, recognising by a new instinct the young man's sincerity, she was affected and encouraged by her old companion's teaching.

But Milly Rolle had great natural disqualifications, compared with Yolande Dupuy, for profiting by such an experience as that of Corner Farm. Yolande was profound, and Milly shallow; Yolande was refined, and Milly rude; Yolande was reserved, and Milly accessible. Yet for all that, Yolande would have been at home in an English

Siberia, and would have found a thousand objects of interest and observation a lifetime before Milly Rolle. Yolande would have learnt to talk to Dame Spud and her good man, and discovered topics in common with them. She would have made herself acquainted with the local names and the rural annals—with all the bad snow-storms, floods, and blights, and the lives lost in the Waäste. And this she would have done even though the northern side of it had not “marched” with the farms of the Mall, and the Mall itself had not been “most Waäste” in Farmer Spud’s grandfather’s day. In return Yolande would have given Grand’mère’s ample chronicle of all the country eras of vine crops and silk-worms. She would have made friends with the whole stock at Corner Farm, till the great mild Juno eyes of the oxen would have looked into hers with a familiar greeting, and the plaintive bleat of the sheep would have become an appeal for sympathy, instead of an utterance of terror. She would have gone wild to coax the Norfolk hawk from the “holt” of ash and alder,

the bittern from the "lode," the gulls and terns from the nearest "broad." She could no more have confined her regards to a dog with a silver spoon in its mouth, like Pickle, than Monsieur Landre and Caleb Gage could have limited theirs. So when Yolande came at last to lighten a heavy week of Milly's enforced seclusion, safe in the surveillance of humble friends like the Spuds, and when the freedom and good-will of girlish intercourse—more in earnest and better worth now—were fully restored between them, she became cognizant of a hundred novelties in the homely, lonely farmhouse, and a hundred attractions and delights for her there.

She began with helping to break the icicles that hung from the low eaves and the water trough, which stood in the centre of the yard like the fountain in the centre of a French village; and when she got a lesson from Dame Spud in milking her favourite cow, her lessons did not end with that. She was annoyed at Milly's apathy, and tried to rouse her mind to the solaces and gratifications to which she was both blind and deaf.

“My child,” remonstrated Yolande, “I do not hate this place, oh *ça!* not at all. I should love it if Grand’mère were but here, and spring and summer come again, with the calves and the lambs, the cry of the lapwing, and the budding of the sallow. As it is, I kiss my hand to all the grave, sober, grown-up company of steers and heifers, rams and ewes. I make love to Jacques the house-dog, my gallant, who would not think twice of eating me up, if he did not know my halting French tongue and my grey French face. I cajole Mother Spud into giving me grain for the starving little beggars of wheat-eats and titmice. But I cannot feed the great sea-eagle,—only, I think of it,” broke off Yolande, in excitement, “he comes as far as the Waäste in hard seasons. Without a doubt I must write a *poulet*—a little chicken of a note—to my dear Monsieur Landre, that he may come here next summer.”

“But who is this Mr. Landre of whom you talk so often?” asked Milly, her curiosity stirred.

“Don’t you know Monsieur Landre? Ah!

to be sure you do not know him," answered Yolande. "He is ravishing, that man; he has ferocious merits: he is as old as Grand'mère, and he was at the galleys for the faith, only think of it! and he has survived the awful galleys! Seest thou, Milly? It is not all bad here. Try it for yourself, my life."

"Never, Yolande," protested Milly gloomily; "I could never be content with so wretched an abode and such low diversions when my papa is a clergyman of the rank of a rector. I have been brought up so differently, with everything handsome and genteel about me. My goodness! Ma'mselle, don't you know that we have fourteen rooms in the Rectory, besides a china closet and a still-room, and that there are not such peach wails and holly hedges for ten miles, out of the Castle gardens, as we have? And you bid me be comfortable in a pig-stye! Not that Molly ain't cleanly," Milly quickly corrected herself; "my mamma made her that, but this is like a pig-stye to what I have been accustomed to; yet you call on me to admire when summer comes. Summer is not here;"

and here Milly interrupted herself again to moralise: "Summer is six months away—who knows what may happen before summer comes! But though summer were here, what have I to admire but a herd of wild cattle frightening me out of my wits, a half-reclaimed field or two with ugly roots and bad herbs sticking through the grass and the corn, and the coarse weeds of the black and brown Waäste, which my papa says is the reproach of the country?"

"*Eh bien*, Milly, there are some things for which I love the *lande* more than either your garden or ours; I should be a suspicion sorry if it were all broken up and cultivated to-morrow, though I should be *bête* if I were so. It is so fresh, as if it had just come direct from God's hands, and were given to the wild creatures which He feeds, and no man tames. When man needs it indeed, good! let him take it and conquer it; the world was made for man, and he is right to exercise his dominion over it, and to rejoice in his dominion. But until then, is it not also good that there should be No

Man's Land, where all men, rich and poor alike, are free to go out in the cool of the day, and to walk, each by himself, with God? It is thus in the depths of our forests, which I never saw, and on the heights of the everlasting mountains."

Milly yawned. "I cannot understand you, Yolande; you are such a strange girl," she added, amending her confession with dignity; "sure, savage forests and mountains must be horrible and shocking; and no civilised being in her senses would go near them if she could help it, to be devoured by she-bears and hooded crows. I'll tell you what I admire—the Castle park and the gardens, and the town meadows at Reedham, where some of the townspeople who have their gardens in that direction have laid out bowers and summer-houses and hermitages and grottoes, with foreign shrubs, and artificial rocks and shell-work; and they have the water diverted from the river into mimic cascades and sweet little lakes. All that is mighty fine, and I affect it, for I am a person of taste;

but I am like my lady, Ma'mselle, who says she can only admire nature *orné*, not nature in *deshabille*, with her hair in curl-papers. I believe it is the polite sentiment of the day ; and therefore it is no wonder, and nobody can blame you, that you are not up to it. After all, it don't matter, when we are vile sinners, and at the worst get much better than we deserve. If we were like the angels, we would not, as Mr. Hoadley tells us, look about for lilies and gillyflowers to waste our precious time upon them, but see a world lying in wickedness, and make haste to escape, like Lot out of Sodom, and draw our neighbours after us, as brands snatched from the burning."

"For me, I do not think the angels refuse to look on the works of God," replied Yolande, musingly. "Why, Milly, they are the very sons of God who shouted aloud for joy when the great framework of the world was complete. And the fiercest of His creatures also praise Him—hail, snow, and vapour, and stormy wind fulfilling His word. How much more, then, the still, small lilies

breathing only purity and peace, which the Master himself bade us consider. Monsieur Hoadley does wrong, great wrong, in slandering and denouncing God's flowers and God's world."

Milly drew back offended. "You must be very wise, Yolande, to know better than your teachers. Much good the silly, senseless flowers ever did a vain, worldly girl like me!"

"Pardon me, Milly," begged Yolande, quickly, "I did not mean to judge the pastor. I have known other teachers—Grand'mère, old Monsieur Landre, and others—who thought quite otherwise, and who loved the world, as being a step to God's throne, and all its creatures as His subjects. The most of them are more loyal and more faithful than we are. But I did not mean that they spoke to all alike, or that all could hear God's voice and see God's face in them; and where that is wanting, that desperate word vanity is written on them all—silly, senseless flowers, as you call them, greedy or cruel animals, fit only for the bouquet, the child's

lap, the essence vat, the game-bag, or to serve as a meal for your hooded crow. But, Milly, even then, the fault is in the eyes, and not in the flowers and the animals."

"Ah, there, you are at your flights again, Ma'mselle. Upon my word, you require taking down; and here comes good Mr. Hoadley on our mare Blackberry, just in the nick of time to do it, and to put us on some more improving discourse."

And Mr. Hoadley it was, who had ridden through the sludge and the chill of mid-winter to study the spiritual condition which he was interested in, and to do his best to rouse still further from its hardening slough of selfishness, frivolity, and impenitence the soul of his rector's stray daughter, who was come to a sense of her error. He went about his business the more ardently that he had himself been a sinner of the same order, with less excuse and with greater condemnation, for he had not merely higher faculties, but he had received a commission, and been consecrated a priest. He had neglected his commission, and well-

nigh forgotten his consecration ; but he was in earnest at last to bid Milly enter with him and all the other workers into the vineyard, and to work manfully and womanfully for what remained of the day, till each should receive the penny, the common token of the Master's gracious acknowledgment of repentance and obedience, whether late or early.

Full of his purpose, which was noble, Mr. Hoadley came and sat with the girls in Dame Spud's kitchen. He missed none of the accessories which in other circumstances he would have been inclined to overvalue as much as Milly. He had brushed aside whatever detained him in his new line of action,—the poetasting and the mooning of those years which he had lived to plainly term his unregenerate days. He treated the tastes which had then occupied him as petty, irrelevant trifles, if not as insidious snares.

To Mr. Hoadley was propounded the question in dispute : “ Sir, will you tell us if you think immortal souls are warrant-

ed in being engaged—not to say engrossed—with mortal things, and not only with fine furniture and fine clothes, savoury food, such as friar's chicken and cherry-pie, but with posies and garden-knots, and such poor tiny creatures as wagtails and humblebees? for Ma'nselle here and some of her friends pass over none of these, which also, good lack! perish in the using."

With his own evil experience staring him full in the face, Mr. Hoadley could give no other answer than the impassioned decree, "As for your word 'warrant,' Madam, I cannot reply to it. But I dare to say, as the creature is subject to vanity,—the poor verses, for example, in which I used to dabble, thinking it no shame to waste more time on polishing their prettinesses than might have served to preach a couple of sermons in different villages, ten miles apart,—I am of the mind, with regard to belles-lettres, pictures, pieces of statuary, and profane music, that since they may become such stumbling-blocks to half-crazy fools who hanker after them, they had better be

curbed, clipped, and kept in their own places, and these very poor places too, or else rejected altogether along with the vile horses and cards on which madmen lay their lives and their deaths."

"Do you hear that, Ma'mselle? Ain't you floored?" cried Milly, triumphantly.

But Yolande, though she did not argue with Mr. Hoadley, said to herself in her French fashion, "*N'importe*, Yolande; never mind, my child. Judge not by appearances, but judge righteous judgment—but when will men, even the best of them, do that? Ah! when will they not judge by what is expedient, judicious, *convenable*—by how men will judge of them, and whether or not their followers will be offended? As if the Lord did not offend his followers, and many of them walked no more with Him; but He did not on that account humour and cheat their prejudices. No, no. Why will they fear the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as these English say, when God is true, and loves truth on the lip as well as in the

inner man? The abuse of a matter is not to rule the use, even in horses and cards. That is the righteous judgment—I am certain of it. And as to the least little plant—the hyssop that springeth from the wall, and the midges of animals—these are among the little ones whom we are not to offend, and who are sent to us to teach us and make us better, if we will only learn and grow good. I know that, and am certain of it also.”

Nevertheless Yolande was pleased when Mr. Hoadley, with an inspiration which carried him far beyond his old, affected, fractious self, told the girls of what he was doing among the vice, misery, and inconceivable ignorance of Sedge Pond. He craved their sympathy for the poor woman, over whose heavy wooden cradle, which held her twin ten-days-old children, her husband and her eldest son had fought and fallen at the christening feast, kicking over the cradle in their struggle, and casting one child beneath their feet, where its spark of light was stamped out before the reeling, raging,

unconscious murderers could be dragged off its small body, and injuring the other so heavily that there was great danger of its growing up a helpless cripple. And he solicited their solace for the patriarch of the village, a hoary old man of ninety, whose children, past the vigour but not past the lusts of life, were so full of their own riots and brawls, that they elbowed aside and forgot the gaunt relic of the past, and savagely taunted and mocked him when they were reminded of him.

Yolande thought it was good to see Milly's blue saucer eyes grow deeper and darker, and fill with tears at such recitals, while she nervously stroked Pickle's white curls, and looked into the dog's liquid eyes. She also thought it was good when Mr. Hoadley read to them from Christiana's progress in the great pilgrimage, and Milly, who had never really cared for or comprehended a reading higher or nearer to her than the dry bones of history, a mock pastoral, a languishing or farcical song, or the broadsheet confession of a hanged highwayman, had new faculties

aroused within her while she listened breathlessly to such difficulties and struggles as had till now fallen flat on deaf ears and a deaf heart. She was greatly impressed and edified when Mr. Hoadley's explanation and application proved the struggles to be her very own, and was so full of Christiana as the representative of herself, of Madam, of Dolly, of Yolande, and of every woman she had ever known, that she ceased to see her present wounded, disgraced self, or Pickle, or Yolande, or Mr. Hoadley, or the Spuds' farm, but hung alone on the dream and its interpretation.

Yolande called the scenes with Mr. Hoadley good, though she was a little shy of her own share of his visits to the Corner Farm, until she received a smart lesson, teaching her that a long memory is not always an advantage, and that girlish vanity is the height of folly. When she returned to Grand'mère, Yolande made a strange request. "Beat me, *ma mère*, before it be too late," she demanded valiantly.

"And why should I beat you at this

stroke of the clock, *petite ?*" answered Grand'mère, with twinkling eyes.

"To beat the naughtiness and giddiness out of me, Grand'mère," asserted Yolande, shaking her head.

"That would require so thick a stick that I could not wield it; I leave that till I marry thee, Yolandette, when I trust, from thy own tale, that thy husband may have a stouter arm. But what is the tale, *fille ?*"

"Well, Grand'mère, I have great shame of it; for my scornfulness is too bad when the young pastor is so good now, and when Milly is a changed girl, as sober and earnest as a judge in her affair, and her affair is repentance and beginning life anew like a ransomed, dutiful child. How should I sit in the seat of the scorner, Grand'mère, besides being *tête montée*, to think that Monsieur Hoadley likes to look at Milly to-day, as well as to lecture her! He has thought over her history till he has taken it to himself, and cannot separate it from his own, and dreams and knows not what will be the next chapter, until he forgets what he was

going to say, and is on the eve of saying something to Milly in quite a different *rôle*. For Milly, she knows only that Monsieur, at whom she was wont to laugh for his Methodism, has too much goodness, wisdom, and kindness for her; and the more of kindness he has, the more of contrition and brokenness of heart has Milly.

“Go, Yolande!” cried Grand’mère, as she waved off the announcement, incredulous, and even a little indignant, and altogether unable to receive it. “You deceive yourself, with your *historiettes* of the man who could not hear the word of evil against you without giving you up as fast as the young Squire of the Mall gave you up. Now, don’t grow red and white, Yolande; it was no fault of yours that two men had evil minds to judge evil of a girl on a word or a look—the look of an affair. Bah! I would not have given my old Squire, the friend of the Frenchman, for all the young bears in the Pyrenees. But the young pastor spoke of reclaiming you, as the young Squire did not presume to do. Caleb

Gage,  *fils*, made public recantation and renunciation of his error in a manner which Monsieur the Pastor has not thought fit to do. He has not come to me, and said, 'Grand'mère, I made one great, proud, uncharitable, miserable mistake,' as he ought to have done."

"Grand'mère," interrupted Yolande, "the young Pastor has weightier matters to think of—good, great work, I assure you."

"Weightier matters than to do justice! Say, then, would it not help instead of hinder his good work if he saw how to do justice, and did it, even in the bagatelle of an old woman's feelings? He thought enough of my feelings once upon a time, did he not? And behold the young pastor, whom you bid me contemplate as having a penchant for a girl who has not the word but the deed of evil, in so far as having been indelicate, imprudent, and undutiful was concerned—what have I to do with such an inconsistent young pastor? Go to the wars with such a pastor! I hope you do not grow a coquette, Yolandette."

“ I hope not, Grand’mère,” said Yolande, laughing. “ I tell you I have no reason because of your friend the pastor. I shall dress the hair of St. Catherine for him. Believe me, Grand’mère, he does not think me at present a hundredth part so interesting as Milly, and not worthy to hold the candle to her, let her have been ever so naughty. It is a frightful misfortune for me, but I will do my utmost to survive the mortification.”

Grand’mère was always appeased and coaxed by her child’s gaiety, and when she thought over the report, and brought to bear upon it the stores of her experience, she came to regard it in quite another light, though it took some time to reconcile her to it.

“ Oh, violins of the village ! that a pastor who had admired a swan should turn to a goose, though a disappointment in an *affaire de cœur* causes the victim either to be blind or to see double for nine days, and during the precarious interval he may marry his grandmother or the *fade* of the village. But why should I beat the pie, the parrot ? ”

continued Grand'mère, tapping Yolande's cheek and detaining the girl by her side. She has quick eyes and a quick tongue, but it is the nature of her sex, and I know that Yolande has less of a pie and a parrot than any woman save the good Philippine. Extremes meet, one cannot deny it, and there is a generosity and a generosity—a generosity which is vain, and a generosity which is humble. Monsieur the Pastor's generosity is a little touched with vanity. Not true, *hé?* Well, why should we grudge it to him? It is a world better than churlishness. And why should I beat you or any one else, *cocotte*, because the good God has helped these two young persons by putting a mutual understanding and affection into their hearts, which may make their growth in grace and their future lives easier? Shall I say that their desire for God is not pure because they have learnt through it to desire each other? Say it who will, I say it not. If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how shall we love our Father whom we have not seen? God, is He not the

God of the heart as well as of the conscience? What am I that I should judge others? Nay, my daughter, the Rector, whom thou hast called a Spartan father, will not be harsh here. When the young pastor will go to him and say, with sudden insubordination and indignation, ‘Monsieur my Rector, thou art too severe to thine own flesh and blood. I see it, and I will tell you so; for I have formed an attachment to your daughter Milly, into which her little *faux pas* does not enter, or if it enters, I love her only the better for it, now that she is sorry for it, and I can shelter her from the consequences, and put it out of sight and mind. Monsieur my Rector, I ask your daughter in marriage with the blessing of God—to end her probation and mine, and to begin a joint life of service in His Church and at His altar.’ Think you that the Spartan father will be incensed or implacable at that discourse? I say, no. He will be amazed, though he might have seen it all along. Perhaps—for this Rector is honest and cutting as a knife—he will reply at first,

‘Monsieur my *Curé*, think well what you are about; my daughter has not been so discreet as I would have wished, and if indiscretion is bad in a pastor’s daughter, it is worse in a pastor’s wife.’ On that the young pastor will protest manfully, ‘I have no fear; Milly will never be foolish again, and the grace of God is with us to help us.’ What then? The Rector will smile and frown, and talk of starving on a curate’s salary, and mean it not at all, but begin to think what he can save and spare for the young couple, and take his *curé*’s arm while they consult, and lean on it as he has not leant on it before. As for Madam, she will fall on the young pastor’s neck, and say she has again found a son; and then the Rector will smile more sadly, and say to himself, ‘A son *comme il faut*, but a different son from my Captain Philip’—*voilà tout!*”

And Grand’mère abruptly ended her little drama triumphantly.

Grand’mère was right to a hair’s breadth. It was only Dolly who pouted and cried out in objection, and Grand’mère was

required to take her to task and bring her to order. “ Didn’t our Milly run away and make a fool of herself, and wasn’t our papa mortal angry at her? and now she is to have a husband and a house before me. It looks as if it were just because she fell into disgrace, for I’m main sure he never thought of looking at her before. I grant you, it is no great sort of a man and a house she will have—I would not have had a gift of them; still, it is the name of them, and it ain’t right that Milly should have even the name of preferment before me now, after what is come and gone; I tell you, I do not like it, Grand’mère Dupuy.”

“ Paper bag! my little girl, you must take the world as you find it. There is no right such as you think of in ‘the world; it would be a worse world than it is if there were. As to the big preference, I know none that the good God gives us for being virtuous, or faithful, or devout, except what is contained in the saying, ‘ See how great things he or she must suffer for my sake.’ That is true, Dolly, and I would not be the

sacrilegious wretch to throw a stone at the afflicted, because I believe that they are, veritably, the anointed of the Lord."

But the queerest turn which events and opinions took, was with regard to the lonely, homely Corner Farm itself. Dame Spud and her goodman were growing old, and had already had thoughts of retiring from the leadership of the van of civilization against the Waäste, to spend the remnant of their days by the hearth of a married daughter in the snugness and sociality of Sedge Pond, where it would be an easy walk for Dame Spud to go up every day to the Rectory, with wool and yarn knitted hose, to wish her old mistress good morning, and taste her cakes and cream cheese.

So the farm, with its field or two of thin corn and rushy pasture, and its stock, was to be let to a new tenant. Houses were not plentiful in the neighbourhood of Sedge Pond, and the income of a curacy, on which brave and resolute women, as good ladies and gentlemen as their descendants, married on the right hand and on the left,

was so small, that most curates' parsonages were not a whit better than the Corner Farm-house could be rendered by a little papering and painting, cherry-tree wood and chintz. And the honest, simple mode of eking out a living by undertaking, with the help of an experienced farm-servant, to cultivate a few acres, was reckoned a resource by no means unbecoming a gentleman and a priest. It was the lot finally fixed on for Mr. Richard Hoadley and Mistress Milly Rolle.

"Ah! that poor Milly," reflected Yolande in dismay when she heard of it; "what banishment for life! What exile must it be, with the sentiments of Milly! She will pine away and perish, even with the consolations of religion and the company of the young pastor, in that poor Corner Farm."

"*Tiens!* the wind has changed," alleged Grand'mère. And so it had; for when Yolande went to visit Milly at the Rectory, where she was reinstalled in the creditable, sedate responsibility and grave dignity of the Rector's eldest daughter, just about to

be married to his trusty curate, she found, to her bewilderment, and to the soft tinkle of Grand'mère's laughter, that Milly's tastes in reference to Corner Farm had undergone a complete revolution. At this later date she was all for the charms of a humble rustic home, for spinning-wheels—though she could not spin a stroke—for pet lambs and calves, notwithstanding that she had always run away from the merest foal, and declined to say bo to a goose, for making bands and mending cassocks; and, though she had not done a stitch of useful work in her life, she took the whole task of it on her shoulders without a moment's hesitation. She was quite full of gathering plovers' eggs and picking mushrooms, and preparing the early supper and serving it to the tired curate, who had been labouring all day among the poor and needy, and who would not disdain to bring home the stranger and the wanderer to share the shelter and the hospitality of a lowly, but for that very reason a freer, as well as a more bountiful roof. So Milly's ditty rang


—an echo of Mr. Hoadley's. She even went so far as to remind Yolande of a crystal rill, which she declared trickled over a mossy bed close by the farm, and which Yolande could not at all remember; and she waxed enthusiastic about a peep of a grove, where she and Mr. Hoadley might erect a seat, which, as the grove consisted of three and a half bent, blasted, superannuated ash trees, out of place on the Waäste, and only making its desolation more felt, Yolande could not help regarding as the most forlorn objects breaking the horizon.

“How tired I am of all this pomp and show!”—Milly confided to the puzzled, diverted Yolande—“not that I blame my papa and my mamma and Doll, for they have never known anything else, nor been brought face to face with Nature to fall in love with her. How I long to get back to my dear modest farm-house, with its thatch and its house-leek—Richard says there must be a house-leek—and its delightful dumb cattle all among the wilds. Of course I

know that these are vanities too, Ma'mselle, and that I must not make idols of them any more than of cedars, and ebony chairs, and brocade gowns. I have not learnt to know my Mr. Hoadley so well, and to be in his confidence, without having heard that needful warning. But one cannot help being mightily taken with Nature when one has come to love her, and to lose taste for art and finery, with all their poor pretence."

## CHAPTER IX.

*The Gathering of the Storm.*

HE spring awoke at Sedge Pond. But it came intermittently with bars of warm brooding sunshine, in which buds swelled and grass stirred amid gentle pipings of song. The dull, dead winter air was alive again for an hour or two, and there were bright fieldlets of blue sky, in which white mountains were piled up gloriously like Islands of the Blest. But all was chequered before the day was done by the scowl of low grey clouds, and the shrieks of the piercing north-east wind, which carried in its train the sting of cutting hail and dash of drenching rain. And by some secret sympathy the social and the moral world seemed to reflect the fitful spring weather.

The old Squire of the Mall had left his

son with great discretionary power in the final settlement of his affairs. The young man was much engaged during the winter and early spring in fitly executing, to the best of his belief, his father's will, and in journeying into neighbouring counties to consult with relations who were united with him in his trust.

Peace and gladness prevailed in Sedge Pond and at the Shottery Cottage. There was talk of an early seed time, a fresh brilliant summer, and a fruitful harvest, intersprinkled with remarks about the fine doings at Mistress Milly Rolle's marriage with good young Mr. Hoadley.

But a change soon came over the people one and all, from the ale-house to the Shottery Cottage. There began to be restless, dissatisfied, gloomy prophecies of a backward season, a cold rainy summer, and a bad harvest. Fainter mutterings of national grievances and injuries reached the sodden, distorted, rankly-overgrown minds of Sedge Pond. Late in reaching, they only entered the more firmly, and threatened

a terrible crop of blind, furious prejudice when they sprang and ripened. And so the villagers came to judge that if there were failures in the wars, and mistaken foreign policy in Government, resulting in heavier taxes and damage to trade, and grinding still harder the hard-ground faces of labourers and small farmers, nothing was to blame for it but the wanton truckling to foreigners for pieces of velvet, sets of lace, china babies, and pug dogs, which fine gentlemen like Lord Rolle and his brother could not live without. But the gentry were dependent on foreigners for other supplies than these. They could not get up their screeching Italian operas, their dishes which no plain Englishman could name, nor their evil domestic vices, which polluted and corrupted the country, without the help of some Madame, or Ma'mselle, or Senora. It was high time the country were well rid of such cattle, and if it were true that prices were to be high and food scarce, it stood to reason that the people should put useless mouths out of their quarters, more especially

when they were the mouths of villainous spies, gabbling treason and plotting treachery against their foolish hosts and entertainers. The natives of Sedge Pond could, of course, much better understand a strong instance of such folly immediately before their eyes, than the complicated sources of mal-administration and abuse of public interest and public funds, which were removed to a distance from them. Old hairs to pluck with the Huguenots, state crimes, some as good as a century old, were revived and bruited about as matters of yesterday in Sedge Pond, and, above all, over the tables in the ale-house. Mutterings of the monstrous bounty which the King in his infatuation paid to these old enemies and false allies, while his own loyal and straightforward subjects were working and starving on scant wages, served like the wind to stir up and kindle into a flame the smouldering brands of grudging indignation.

Even the refugees who at this time passed through Sedge Pond oftener than usual, men whose brown or blue suits were for the

most part only remarkable for being punctiliously long in the skirts and high at the ears, but not a bit less threadbare than those of their neighbours, were nervously conscious of suspicion and spite dogging their footsteps. For this, and for other reasons, Monsieur confined himself and his friends more closely to his private room, where they interchanged and examined trade parcels and Huguenot papers until far into the night, leaving little time for social entertainment, and hardly so much as an opportunity for the visitors to greet so venerable a mother among the Huguenots as Grand'mère. He bundled away the strangers with the coach next morning, and stood guard upon them till the last moment.

“Grand'mère,” observed Yolande, “my father must be very busy with so many customers and agents constantly coming to him. Besides, he has his journeys to London and Norwich, which I observe he has doubled this last year. I do believe it, he must be growing rich, and I shall be a great heiress, and shall found a charity one fine day like

that of the Mall, or a hall in a college like that of Sedan and Saumur, where your relative was professor. Is it not so? For all the boxes with my poor work lie powdered with dust, never sent away since the day of the year. I should like well enough to be an heiress, but, Grand'mère, I do not like my poor work to be forgotten, and must I still work to have more of it packed up, powdered, and left staring me in the face beside the commode and the *malles* every time I go into my father's room?"

"You must work still, my little work-woman," said Grand'mère, somewhat absently, and with a little worry in her placid face as she bent over the caraways and heliotropes in her window. "We must all work in faith, our whole lives long, and we must not think too much of being heiresses, not even of the kingdom of Heaven, though that is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, where there is no moth, nor rust, nor thief, no, nor contrabandist nor plotter—I believe it well. It is necessary that we think of God who works,

and of how work is good in itself, and duty good in itself. All things are very good, *petite*, and we may need the help of the least of them yet. I tell you, Yolande, as I told Dolly yesterday, that on this crumbling bit of earth there is no rest or prosperity promised to us. No, truly, there is strife and tribulation, and no promotion save that of suffering. Nothing is sure but death. If we march under our Leader's orders and carry His cross, which was His ensign, it is necessary that the battle rage loudest and longest round us, that we become a spectacle to men and to angels, and it does not seem to me that this can be helped any more than His agony and passion. Yes, it is sad and terrible, Yolande, though not so much so to you as to me; for you are one of the recruits, who are all for the prison and the death, of which, like Peter, you know nothing; but I know a little of what the prison and the death are,—a living grave and a grinning skeleton, except for the light which shines above and beyond them; and it is that which must fill our eyes."

Yolande wondered why Grand'mère should answer her so solemnly when she herself had spoken lightly, almost jestingly. She was further perplexed that Grand'mère should put her off when she attempted to investigate what was passing around, and puzzle her by wide, homely, significant phrases.

“If your little finger tell you a secret,” insisted Grand'mère, “repeat it not to your thumb—it is a prying, meddlesome, seditious rogue, that thumb. Women and girls are made to be seen, and not heard, where the affairs of men and fathers are concerned. There was once a clever woman who could not be still as a mouse, who could not wait like a statue, and the consequence was that she woke up one morning and found herself an executioner; and, horror of horrors! she had been the Monsieur Paris to her own family. She had meant no harm, she had not known what she was about, but she had not been still. Ah! yes, stillness is a great virtue, though Solomon did not speak so much of it as of strength and honour.

But I think a greater than Solomon praised it when He praised the better part which should not be taken away from—a woman. And, oh ! the marvel, how He praised the weak women—this one for her faith, that one for her generosity, and that other for her meek reverence. Ought we then to shrink from meeting the fire, and standing in the breach when He wills it ?”

But sometimes Grand'mère herself escaped from the thralldom of anxiety, doubt, and apprehension which had laid hold of her. Her suspicions and fears would then appear to her as chimeras bred of the past troubles of her long and changeful life. She would prattle with the blithest about the spring, for which the old tenderly yearn, and about the summer which was coming, and about the young couple whose fortunes lay all before them, and to whom she had been a friend indeed, and with regard to whom, therefore, she was entitled to have the grace of loving.

At last, in the most ungenial mood of the spring, before the teeming world of herbs and insects could make more than a cold, shy

response to its ardent wooer, there arrived at the Shottery Cottage the little, gruff, reserved, grey rabbit of a *savant*, who had worked in the galleys, but now appeared in a new stock with a buckle, and cuffs reaching to his elbows. He received everything like attention and honour as cavalierly as ever, and was not much more communicative on his present purposes and plans than on his old history.

But when Monsieur Landre was sitting with the Dupuys over his *café noir*, on the very afternoon of his arrival, he suddenly propounded a hare-brained scheme. The whole family at the Shottery Cottage, he proposed, should quit Sedge Pond, carrying their household gods with them. He advised that they should start with him for London, where he would get lodgings for them near his own, in Soho, and engagements in his manufactory, if they wished it. The great Mr. Bentley, he said, was partial to *émigrés* among his designers and colourists, and rewarded them liberally for their services, besides affording them the satisfaction of

seeing a most ancient and honourable art restored to its merited ascendancy.

The Huguenots, in their time, had been well accustomed to hasty flights and unexpected exoduses. That time was gone by now, however, and this movement seemed uncalled for, and in a great measure inexplicable. But Monsieur Landre would not be put past his proposal either by *gloria* or *coupeaux*, but stirred his cup vehemently, and poked out his head, showing, as he attempted to peer with his scorched contracted eyes into the faces of Monsieur and Grand'mère, that he had adopted a pigtail.

Yolande first gaped incredulously, unable to realize the possibility of such a step, then turned round wistfully, and hung breathlessly on Grand'mère's reply.

Monsieur shrugged his shoulders, and cried, "Ta, ta, ta! Farce! The hangman! To France sooner."

But at this the pigtail only wagged more impetuously and imperiously, insisting, in dumb show, that there were weighty reasons for its possessor's startling words, and asking

a more serious consideration of his invitation and a more decided answer to it.

Grand'mère looked at her son, as he stuck his thumbs, English fashion, in his vest, and planted his feet firmly on the floor, smiling reassurance at her, while at the same time he raised his eyebrows at the panic of poor Monsieur Landre, who had been rendered eccentric—*tête bleu*! quite unhinged—by his early adversity.

“My very good friend Landre, the geese will cackle—when have they not cackled? but, for the term of my life, I stir not from this delectable spot, where I have pitched my tent and planted my vine—in a figure, for, *ouf*! tents would have much cold here and vines, alas! would not grow, unless in frames of glass.”

“Monsieur, I have read in the classics—the Delphin classics—a long time ago, when I was a little boy, that one time the geese they cackled, and the people they heard and minded, and what happened? The Roman capitol was saved,” continued Monsieur Landre, with marked emphasis.

“The *historiette*, in order to be well applied, has need of two things,” criticised Monsieur, carelessly: “a capitol and a foe. That is what I say as a man, but the women may judge differently. For aught that I know they may be dying with the wish to see the town again. What say you, my mother?”

Grand'mère looked at Yolande, and caught the extreme reluctance, the piteous entreaty which spoke in the girl's eyes. To have gone up and seen the great town and the settlements of Huguenots there, would have been very well, and Yolande, girl-like, might have welcomed the novelty and the excitement; but it was a cruel shock to hear the talk of bidding good-bye, a long good-bye, to the home where Yolande's heart had grown up, where it had gone out on its own venture, and where it had been met and driven back, and all but wrecked, by storms.

Grand'mère bent forward and took the empty cup from Monsieur Landre's hand, then took the hand itself, where the deep shadow of his cuff hid the weals worn and

seared into his boyish flesh three-fourths of a century before. "A thousand thanks, my friend," she said, "but we will stay with our man here. It is not worth while that the women risk life by themselves. What can harm the child and me and Philippine—the daughter, the mother, the wife of Hubert? We go where Hubert goes, and dwell where he dwells. What would you, my old man? Is not that right?"

The pigtail shook again, but more slowly, sadly this time. "*Si, si fait, Madame.*" Monsieur Landre acquiesced, as if in a looked-for, almost an inevitable defeat.

Yolande was not blind or deaf, or totally incurious and unalarmed, though she had not the experience of the others to forewarn her, and though she had been brought up in the total passiveness of a French girl. She had profited sufficiently by the inspiration of her Huguenot origin, her life on English soil, and the ties she had formed here, to have had laid within her heart the foundation of principles of independence and energy. She was therefore shaken to

the centre by the vaguest hint of evil to Grand'mère. Yolande, under pretext of presenting Monsieur Landre with the *petit verre* of a traveller, contrived, previous to his departure, which Monsieur was expediting as usual, to have an interview with the family friend. And Yolande tried, as far as a girl like her dared to try with a man who was not a member of her family, but who had been her friend and teacher, to get an explanation of his mission, just as she had sought enlightenment when his wary contradiction and reluctant qualification of her delight in the extravagant popularity of Grand-mère after the Sedge Pond sore throat had first vexed and disquieted her.

But Monsieur Landre, like the great majority of the French, believed a girl a notably unsuitable recipient of a secret of any kind, much more of an important and dangerous secret. Either this or the unutterable loathing with which he recoiled from expatiating on the frightful barbarities of the galleys, had rendered him incorrigible in his reticence, and made him a man of mys-

tery to the end. "There is nothing, my child, nothing." Monsieur Landre withdrew into himself as he took snuff, and assured Yolande that there was "nothing to which you could say *bien entendu*. All the world knows that we are Huguenots, and dwell among people who accord us shelter and a bounty—not always at the best market. But I do not pity myself, *tout-çà* and *tout-ça*, yet I have had more to pity myself for, word of Denis Landre! The English have been good to me, only it is necessary that we French and Huguenots hold together for the nation and the faith, even if we do not agree on other things. Your father will tell you that. So, Mademoiselle, if you have ever any desire to change your abode, to come to London and make a little money—and the girls of the *bourgeoisie* often have trades or serve as book-keepers to their fathers and uncles in France—you will find a friend in me. To be a silk-weaver in Languedoc or Dauphiné before the Revocation, and to be the same at Spitalfields or Norwich, is quite another thing. There-

fore, if you come to have envy of my aid in London, *Misé*, here is my address, near to Soho. If you will come, I shall show you my garden on the roof, such as there is not another in London, and my menagerie, and you will become my little pupil again. Is it not so? And, *enfin*, I may have the honour of introducing you to the great Mr. Bentley."

Monsieur Landre left his address also with Grand'mère, of whom he took an elaborate farewell, going up for the purpose to her room, where, in her white embroidered cap and *peignoir*, she sat up in her great bed to receive him, while it was still the raw, chill, early morning. Monsieur Landre kissed Grand'mère's hand, and Grand'mère kissed her old friend on both cheeks, "for all the world as if them two were ne'er to meet again here below," as Prie blurted out, while Deb began to rebuke her elder for the words the moment the two had retired to their kitchen.

"As bold as a hatchet, then," said Prie, wrathfully describing the liberty.

“What for could you ever go and say that, Prie?” remonstrated Deb, “and old Madame fourscore, and old Monsieur beatin’ Methusalem? It is as like as blades o’ grass that they’ll never see one another alive again, Prie; but how ever could you go and be so ’ard ’earted as even ’em to it?”

“’Ard ’earted to even an old man and ’ooman whose feet is a-treading on the brink of the grave, that mappen they’re saying farewell to one another, and to right-down turmoil and misery for time, that they may be free to say good day to dozens of friends of their youth, and to pure peace and blessedness, for eternity?” So Prie protested indignantly. “’Ard ’earted be it? But if ever an impudent swatch of a babby like you, Deb Pott, evens old Madam’s friends to Methusalem, and old Madam hersen to being fourscore and not long for this world—what have you to do with that, a’d like to hear? And haven’t you knowed and seed that the young go afore the old as often as not? If you say a word agin it, it is the

back of the door you'll see yet, as sure as a've been christened Prie."

"Hoadley, do you observe anything strange in the conduct of these parish gentry of ours to the family at the Shottery Cottage?" anxiously questioned the Rector one day. "Manners are not what we may pride ourselves on at Sedge Pond. Though the people behave genteel enough to me, I confess I do not like the way in which they've begun once more to stare into the cottage windows and hang about the garden gate, as if they were taking observations of the foreigners. And the men, I notice, gather in knots after work hours, and one fellow harangues the rest, as if they had all a common grievance which he expounded to them. Does it strike you that there is anything out of the common in the villagers' behaviour—anything dangerous? You know the Sedge-Pondians are rough diamonds."

"No, sir; I have noticed nothing. Do the people meet, sir? May it not be to talk of some of the warnings and awakenings

which they have had lately? I do believe some of them are savingly impressed."

"I hope so. There is room," responded the Rector, briefly; "but I wish Mr. Lushington had not taken this time to go up to town to settle accounts with the family's new butler. He ought to be familiar with the signs of the place, and I should have liked to have heard his opinion," the Rector reflected, as if he did not find his intended son-in-law very practical.

"I do not think there is the slightest fear of the villagers being guilty of anything so foolish and brutal as mischief to the Dupuys, who were very good to them in their need; you surely forget, sir," the curate continued, to assure the Rector, who shook his head.


Mr. Hoadley was essentially a man of few ideas. His first idea had been himself; his second, what great things he should do for his Master and his fellow-men. He was not unkind nor ungrateful; he was anything but spiteful, for his own heart was satisfied, though his prospects were different from

what he had pictured to himself. With all his graces, and the last best grace of Heaven among them, he was as incapable of wide apprehension and sympathy as his Mistress Milly.

The Rector was older and wiser, but he still flattered himself, as on the occasion of the election (in spite of its lesson), that he could overawe and master his people—that he could chain and gag the wild beast in them, the wild beast which lurks in every mob. He had ridden in among his parishioners and quelled them when they were in the very open act of violence, ere now, and he had faith that he could do so again. Thus, by the heedlessness of one watchman and the pride of another, by the confidence of Grand'mère and the mingled craftiness and recklessness of Monsieur, chances were lost, and time passed until the fate which, in the great march of events, Providence held in store, was at hand.

## CHAPTER X.

*The Storm burst.*

“Y son, you must go,” said Grand’-mère, when the storm burst at last, and Monsieur was made aware, through some of his agents, that a warrant of state had been issued against him, and that an officer had been sent from London to apprehend him.

Monsieur had dabbled in intrigues all his life, and they came to him almost as naturally as silk-weaving. On the whole, they had been for Protestantism, in its aspect of political freedom, as he recognised it. The public acknowledgment of the rights of the Huguenots, and their restoration to their native land, were the ends he had had in view; and for the promotion of these he desired the establishment and prosperity of

the Whig party, and the confusion of the Tory. But it is hard to touch pitch and not be defiled. If Monsieur's personal interests intruded into and defiled his schemes, that is not, on the whole, surprising. If he introduced a little smuggling into his enterprises in silks, laces, and other commodities, and was in the habit of communicating such private information very impartially, either from France to England, or from England to France, as did not bear on his main projects, it was a course from which the philosophy of Rochefoucauld and St. Simon by no means excluded him. All honest, God-fearing men, however, called it public treachery—treachery, at once, to the country which had adopted him, and the country which had born him.

Monsieur, certainly not a coward by physical organisation, had been rendered still more regardless by long immunity from punishment. Thus he had been led to deride Monsieur Landre's desperate attempt to win him, at the last moment, from the volcano on which he was standing. When

the crisis came at last, and exposure and retribution stared him in the face, the middle-aged, double-minded, plausible Monsieur of Sedge Pond went, as he might have done forty years before when he had broken but a few branches in his father's vineyard, and confessed all to his mother. He poured into her true, tried ear the full tale of his sin and trouble, and waited for her counsel and commands with as full faith in her as though she had been a superior being, and in as entire submission to her will as if he still lived in the innocence of the past.

Grand'mère did not say to him that he might have thought of the long lessons, the tender yearnings, and the fervent prayers which she had bestowed on him throughout the labyrinth of his wanderings; nor did she say that he need not have lapsed so far from the spirit of these, to come to her at last for comfort after he had gone near to break her heart. She might chide, and she had often chidden, though she did not know how to rebuke her devoted son

sharply. But to reproach him, to make the bitterness of his fall more bitter to him, was not in Grand'mère. On the contrary, God's pity for Hubert was to be reflected in his mother's face. It was to be the most loving consideration for his suffering, and the most anxious summoning up of all her energies for the lightening of his burden. His escape must be contrived, justice too must be satisfied, but there was no law, human or divine, that required Monsieur's old mother to give him up to the State which he had offended.

Happily, from Monsieur's early training as a scout, his business connection, and his familiarity with more or less unauthorised modes of transport, his escape, so soon as he should be beyond the immediate neighbourhood, became, comparatively, a practicable matter even to trembling women.

“But I go to-night, that is certain, and how will you be ready, my old woman?” asked Monsieur, careful of his mother as ever; “or shall I risk waiting at Yarmouth or Harwich, so that you can follow with

the delay which is necessary for your years? No, that will not do. I cannot fix on either port till I am on the way, and have heard more news by the first post. I may have to change my route altogether, and, after all, I do not think I could trust you alone on the road. Nay, my good mother, the jockeys would shake your grey head off with the jolting. The English dogs' weather would freeze you to the coach seat or the pillion. Ah! that will be all remedied when we get to the Carolinas in America—that refuge of the Huguenots. But for the present, what shall we do, *ma mère*?"

"I shall remain here, my son; I am too old a horse to travel," replied Grand'mère, with a sickly smile. "A new half of the globe is more than half a world farther off than the little chamber of the grave to a woman of fourscore who has seen nearly all her contemporaries housed before her. No, I say not that—I eat my words; but I cannot encumber your retreat. Go, Hubert, make a new home across the great waves of

the Atlantic among the colony of our people in the Carolinas ; and if there is still breath in this rag of a body, I shall go to you, my *garçon* ; but I cannot accompany you,—it is impossible, you must see it.”

“ *Peste !* it is more impossible for me to abandon you,” persisted Monsieur, with the swollen veins of a mortal struggle rising on his forehead. Here was his Nemesis, or was it his God in controversy with him ? Every Huguenot knew the saying of Agrippa D’Aubigné to Henry of Navarre when the incorruptible Protestant saw the wound in the lip which the renouncer of Protestantism had sustained from an assassin’s dagger : “Sire, hitherto you have denied God with your lips, and God has been contented with piercing your lips ; but when you shall deny Him with your heart, then shall God pierce your heart.”

Were God’s arrows now indeed in Monsieur’s heart ? His mother had never ceased to be the pride of his heart, the apple of his eye.

“You abandon me not, my son ; I stay by

my own choice—that is to say, by my own judgment and God’s will. I cannot do more than is possible for me. I stay only till better days come, when, if I am not gone where you will follow, Hubert, you will reclaim me.”

“But they will revenge themselves on you, little mother,” cried Monsieur, with tears as he rose up. “Alas! they will visit my offences on my mother, and I must save myself from that extremity of wickedness and misery. A thousand times rather I would stay and brave all. What are their prisons, their Old Baileys, their Tyburns, when it comes to her cherished head?”

“You must not stay, my son. You must have care for your mother’s heart as well as her head. I will not have you to stay, I have said it. And you are not reasonable, Hubert, my poor old *gars*. The English Government is just, is honourable, is merciful for that. You have abused its indulgence—alas! it is true, I cannot deny it,—but it would scorn so poor a prey as an old woman in her son’s stead. The English

Government will not touch me, and I shall not be left alone ; I shall have Yolande and Philippine, and the good girls, Prie and Deb, to bear me company. *Tiens !* we will be—no, not merry as grigs, that may not be, but safe as bats.”

“I shall go or stay as you and my father wish it, Grand’mère,” submitted Yolande, with a great gulp of terror and distress, recalling now with consternation and remorse how she had thought and looked when the question had been of the whole Huguenot family turning their backs on Sedge Pond for London.

“Of course, *petite*, you will do as you ought,” Monsieur accepted Yolande’s offer with something that sounded like supreme indifference after what had gone before it. “But how with my wife?”

“For me, I go with my husband,” declared Madame with some severity, taking everybody by surprise, though in reality nothing could be plainer or more likely than her behaviour when her friends had time to reflect on it. It was Madame’s duty as a

wife, and Madame had always been devoured with a desire to do her duty, as she reckoned it. She believed she would have gone into the *aïgues mortes*, have suffered a dragonnade in her own person, sooner than knowingly fail in her duty. She had almost longed for the test, she had half envied the persecutions of the Huguenots before her. She had taken so little interest in the country where her lot for many years had been cast, that she did not altogether comprehend wherein lay the difference between Monsieur's tribulation and the old woes of the faithful. She did not give him entire credit for being persecuted for righteousness' sake; she had too keen an appreciation of him as a man of the world for that. She judged that the strait was occasioned by some question belonging to the Huguenot alliance with perfidious England; but undoubtedly Monsieur had risen in Madame's estimation by having come under the grasp of the law of the land, and she prepared with gloomy zest and dignity to share his risks and hardship.

Monsieur had always been bourgeois enough to pay scrupulous respect to the rights of his wife, and he agreed to Madame's will with that indefinable mixture of complacence and imperturbability which marked him in all his relations with her. He might be painfully, even dangerously cumbered by Madame's journeying with him, or he might be in urgent need of a woman's cares in the personal details and domestic management for which he had all his life depended on women. It was hard to tell. There remains only to record that Madame decided to depart with him, and Madame had a clear title to dispose of herself as she wished. Monsieur bowed over the bony hand ready to be put in his, and there was no more to be said.

At the height of the Huguenot movement and the Huguenot trials, the sudden breaking up of households had been a common occurrence, and partings of members of families for indefinite periods to enter on new and untried phases of life the normal experience of the people. Grand'mère had

known these days, but she had been separated from them by a great interval of years and events. In spite of her cares and fears, she had not expected to know them again, and however they might come to her daughter-in-law, they came to her with the dismal odds between suffering for conscience' sake and suffering for wrongdoing. When the feet totter and the hands tremble, when the grasshopper becomes a burden to the weary heart and brain which cry out at their own distorted shadows, the effects of a social earthquake, tearing them from the supports to which they had clung, are very hard to bear. But Grand'mère bore everything because it was for Hubert's sake, because it was her cross laid upon her by a truer, tenderer friend than Hubert.

It was a terrible sentence that came to Monsieur. Cutting off his right hand and plucking out his right eye would have been easier than what was demanded of him. It was like giving his heart from his bosom to resign his mother ; and it was the fruit of his own devices, the bed he had made for himself.

“I have been a bad character, *ma mère*, in spite of everything,” he groaned aloud at the moment when he was to go from her—“a selfish wretch, a reckless villain.”

“Not true, my son,” she contradicted him; “but you will do one thing more for the love of the old woman,” she pled, holding him fast. “You will believe in more than her when she is no longer with you, that you may love and trust still when she is gone from your sight, my friend—that we may hold communion together when our bodies are parted,—ah! my child, that we may hold communion together for ever.”

“I will try, my mother—and you—you will pray for your faithless son.”

And surely there is hope for such men as Monsieur when, with all their corruption, they retain in their right hand a jewel of the first water—filial tenderness, the reverence unsurpassed, all but unapproached, for weak womanhood in its holiest form of motherhood.

Madame broke down also, at the instant

of action. She had spoken and read so much of persecutions that she had almost persuaded herself that she had been in the thick of them. She had learnt to think of them as a crown of distinction and glory reserved for the salt of the earth, and quite endurable by her, at least. Madame lived to find, like many another perfectly sincere Christian, that talking and doing are operations standing far enough apart from each other; nay, that to do the first, however fast and with all the warmth in the world, is not the best preparation for the second.

“I am a furious *poltronne*,” cried the honest woman, “when it comes to leaving the corner of the fire. I recoil from it, I have palpitations of the heart. I know not how I shall pass over the common roads, through the strange inns, by the *malhonnêtes gendarmes* of the ports, how I shall survive, even, the *mal de mer*, which a child of a traveller has to encounter. How it can be that before the turn of the clock I shall say, ‘*Adieu, adieu, petite mère,*’ ‘Until we meet again, Yolandette,’” wept Madame; “*quoi?*”

I know nothing, I know not myself. I feel I should be afraid to remain, to be among women alone all the day, like a convent of nuns without the breastwork of the grating, in the middle of the *canaille*. Me, I cannot tell now why I went not out into the midst of the village with Grand'mère and Yolande to nurse the sick when the sickness was here. Was it, in truth, hard apathy?—or was it low skulking from the beggar of contagion? *Allons*, I know not myself any longer, and from what I do know I despise and hate myself. To the Lutherans, the Catholics, the executioner—though I shall screech and struggle in his hands, I am certain of it—with this cheat and traitress of myself!”

“My true, my honourable Philippine,” Grandmère consoled Madame with fond fervour, “thou wilt know thyself again better than ever; and even if thou shouldst never know thyself again, there is One who knows thee and judges righteous, yes, merciful judgment.”

Thus it happened that on one of those

reluctant, sullen spring evenings, when the twilight seemed to scowl and hide its face from the drooping buds, which withered before their time, Monsieur handed out Madame, and waved his hat to make up for neglecting to kiss his hand to the remaining inmates of the cottage, who did not venture to follow the couple farther than the door, —the sight sending a jealous hue and cry through Sedge Pond. The travellers carried only a few packages, as if they were going no farther than Reedham, or at the most Norwich, on a rare bit of pleasure. They did not set out in the great mail-coach, which, whether it went or came, carried always with it a strong flavour of London and London news, but in a post-chaise, the grandeur of which was a parting offence and insult to the villagers. Nobody dreamt of riding post below the rank of the Rector and his lady. Even young parson and Madam Hoadley would be counted mad should they pretend to any such fine doings when they were “buckled.” The household of women, old and young, was left, as

Madame had said, without even the barrier, long impregnable, of the *grille*, on the hostile soil of Sedge Pond, where enmity had resisted so many friendly overtures that it might be considered to have prevailed, and to be flourishing pure and undefiled.

Within less than a week after this event, the metropolitan officer who had Monsieur for his object, arrived at Sedge Pond, travelling post in his turn. He brought the great hue and cry to the villagers' itching ears, that Monsieur Dupuy, who had dwelt so long among them, making a handle of the little village on the great road, had been an offender and impostor all along, a paid agent of their natural foes across the channel, transmitting the intelligence which their coach became a vehicle to carry. When men could be hanged for a single act of smuggling, and when strings of men had been lodged in Dover and York castles, and brought out and executed in batches for being mixed up in small risings and riotings under a paternal government, Monsieur seemed to deserve not simply to be

hanged, but to be quartered, and every creature belonging to him to be hooted and hounded as sinks and snares, out of decent villagers' company.


Not to say that the officer proceeded on those bloody-minded principles. He was a man of the abounding good-humour which flows from one who is at once pompous and boisterous. He ruffled it a little like a justice, stared at Yolande, but was reasonably civil to Grand'mère. He ate what was set before him with wonderful condescension, and, as if that were not enough honour, cast sheep's eyes upon some of Grand'mère's treasures, and threw out broad hints for them. Finally, he carried away, as a triumphant tribute to his rendering himself agreeable to the ladies, an antique carved *flacon*, and a *timbale en vermeil*, which he was so good as to call two outlandish Toby Fillpots. He had made an examination of the premises previously, and had not been very particular after he had discovered traces on the hearth in Monsieur's cabinet of an extensive conflagration of papers. He took himself

off without further delay or injury, but unquestionably he cared not at all that he left Sedge Pond behind him in a ferment.

In the ale-house gossip the Royal Bounty to the French intruders rose rapidly from fifteen to fifty thousand, and then up to a million, all wrung from the sweat of the brow of overtasked, abused native subjects. And yet Mounseer, not content with ruining the credit of the army and the navy in countless battles past, present, and to come, was guilty of false charges on illicit information—how obtained, or for what purpose, nobody paused to ascertain—against every individual, great and small, in Sedge Pond. And the effect of all was that at last the presence of even a dog belonging to the Dupuys at the Shottery Cottage was looked upon as a monstrous affront and scandal.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Scapegoats.*

RAND'MÈRE and Yolande were profoundly ignorant of the state of public feeling at Sedge Pond. Grief swallowed up apprehension. The two women had kept close within doors since the revelation of Monsieur's delinquency, and were waiting and watching intently for tidings of the fugitives.

Deb was the herald of the villagers' malice. "If so be you be able to bear it, old Madam—you do be the only Madam as is left to us—dontee miss Madam proper's rare laments on we and the wicked world? Her bark were worse than her bite, it were; and the house do be main dull and dozened without her melancholic ditties; sure she would have enjoyed a stramash, and her up to the mast-head on't,

to cry, 'Come on.' But a' div think us ought to tell 'ee, old Madam—you do be old," Deb went off again, frank as she was, fain to beat about the bush; "though big Prie dared me to even the likes of 'ee to hoary heads, and though there been't a younger Madam here-away now. For that matter, Madam as were here weren't young, were of the kind that ain't ever young, like a plant of southernwood. Prie and me, we be pinte'd at, and cried to, and fouled with dirt, whenever we enters the street."

"Chickens will be chickens, and children children, my best Deb," answered Grand'mère, composedly. "*Hein!* wert thou not a child once, thy wise self?"

"There been't no childer in the business. There be men with slouching shoulders, and beards on their chins, as weren't never childer in my time. One of them shied a stone into the garden gate, last time a' passed, as had brained a child, and been its monument forby. It was the same man as taunted Prie with being refugees' spawn, sold to the Devil, and showing the cloven hoof for a sign. A'

mun at no price go out into the street, nor you, Madam, nor Ma'mselle, till the ill blood be spilt."

"I go out this afternoon, Deb ; I go where I have gone before. I wish to ask for the little child who has the fractured limbs, and for the old woman who has the cramps. I crave pardon for not having asked before these days ; I have been very selfish. Yolande carries the *tisane bienvenue* ! The men know us well ; they have been rejoiced to see us ere now ; they will call no names to us, but have shame, compunction. Behold all !"

The men had some shame : they drew back and shrank out of sight when the old woman sallied out amongst them, with no armour but the benefits she had rendered to them, and the good-will she bore them. But Grand'mère found every door once more shut in her face by hands which had been stretched out to her in their extremity—hands that she had grasped ; while blood-shot eyes, which had looked into her dove-grey eyes with an agony of appeal, and had not looked in vain, now covertly watched

her rejection without a sign of relenting.

Discomfited, Grand'mère returned home, curbing her indignation, and resolutely resisting the dread and sinking of the heart which stole over her. She only looked wistfully in Yolande's face, and whispered, "They will know us better some day, *pauvrete* ; it is we who are poor miserables to-day—but they will live to know us better—at last."

That night stones were thrown, and not at the garden gate alone. A volley rattled against the diamond-shaped windows of the cottage, and shivered them ; and towards dusk an instalment of a disorderly mob which had collected, kindled a bonfire in the street, in dangerous proximity to the thatch roofs, and not a hundred yards from the gable of the Shottery Cottage. In the childishness of folly and violence, the men shouted and gesticulated round it, and ended by giving a display of small puppets, hastily manufactured of straw and rags, and having a far-fetched resemblance to a man and several women, arrayed in cloaks, hats,

hoods, jackets, and caps. These rude symbols were persistently jerked and danced with frantic fervour in the light of the flames which flashed on the broken windows, until, with oaths and cries, they were hustled and flung into the heart of the fire, which consumed them forthwith.

Grand'mère acted like a *vraie châtelaine*,—with spirit and sense. She allowed no lights within doors, and made the shutters fast, to exclude as far as possible the light without. But she would not hear Prie's dry suggestion: "There be oceans of hot water, Madam, in the great kettle, so be they come underneath the wall, a-clambering to the winders. And the wench Deb, she be right down confident that she could fire Mounseer's fowling-piece, as would send a bird-shot or two into the faces of the ringleaders."

Notwithstanding, there was no sleep for the household of the Shottery Cottage that night, as they sat with nerves on the stretch. Small spurts of rage and valour came and went, but soon waned for want of expression. And it was with the increasing fear of beings

defenceless and timid by nature, that they waited and prayed for the ashy grey of the spring morning.

Long before morning, both fire and mob died away. But it was peculiar to the slow, stealthy, brooding village nature, that its blind wrath rose and fell and rose again, and that there was no security in its temporary lull, for it always returned to the charge, and step by step advanced to its end. The Rector had some knowledge of this characteristic of the villagers. He went himself to the Shottery Cottage, early on the following day, for the first time since he had received the account of Monsieur's true character and flight. His purpose was to request Grand'mère on no account to attempt to cross the threshold, or to suffer any of her family to go out till he gave her leave. At the same time he wished to comfort her with the assurance that, if the village really rose and threatened to molest her, he would be on the spot to put an end to the proceedings without so much as a necessity of reading the Riot Act.

By noon the village was reinforced by stragglers who had gone to their work in the morning and had come home for dinner. They brought with them country recruits mad with the information of the mighty favours which had been lavished on foreigners by a false government, and the poor return which had been paid for it, as proved by the base betrayal of Sedge Pond by the Dupuy family. The population in the neighbourhood was not strictly agricultural. It included an unsettled, semi-lawless class, some of whom were engaged as goose-herds, and others as snipe-shooters and cockle-gatherers from the coasts. They formed fit audience for such a rumour, and were well calculated to improve the occasion of its delivery.

When the shadows began to lengthen, the village and its allies rose, and presented a ragged regiment of smock-frocks and soiled caps. Their hearts were filled with black envy and rancour, their fists were equal to hammers, and there were bludgeons bristling here and there, more than enough to cow

and scatter like small dust the frail troop of women opposed to them, even though every woman had possessed the bones and sinews of young Deb Potts.

In the ragged regiment, there were women, too, who wore red cloaks, or were in their house attire. They were stolid and sullen, or light-headed and giddy slatterns, who had come out to egg on the men.

The Shottery Cottage was in a state of siege. There was no longer room to doubt the fact, and the malice of the besiegers was momentarily growing, like the surge and swell of the sea in a storm.

The Rector arrived to redeem his pledge, and addressed the people in the tone of an undaunted, indignant gentleman:—"My men, what do you mean by this un-English work? Are you aware that you are simply molesting a houseful of women—ladies, my friends, and their servants? If you have any grudge against Monsieur,—he is a single man, still he is a man—wait till he turn up, and then settle it with him lawfully; but don't bully women, else I'll think you a greater

set of curs than I took you for. Come, you rascals, disperse, and have done with this ugly mockery, or it will be the worse for you."

To the Rector's dismay, his remonstrance and sharp reprimand produced no effect, except in the way of calling forth dogged growls, squaring of backs, setting shoulder to shoulder, and at last a low roar of recrimination—"Have done yoursen, Pearson. Mind your own business—this here be none of yourn. You be took in yoursen, with the rest of the gentry, by the French scum. Remember your darter, good young Mr. Hoadley's wife as is to be, and how nigh hand she were debauched by the slyboots here, as quiet as a May puddock, with her charity and her religion. Go home, and be thankful that your lass has escaped, and let us a-be to root out the nest of hornets, and save our lasses."

It was to no purpose that Mr. Philip Rolle kept his ground—nay, forced his person into the closely-wedged mass,—that he singled out individuals to call them by

name, and abated his dignity to shout and threaten in his turn. He was under the disadvantage of not towering on horseback, having neither riding-whip nor spurs to cleave the ranks, and lash and stamp down resistance. He had not the Riot Act in his pocket to pull out and read, summoning the people, under the pains and penalties of the law, to break up and withdraw to their own homes. And even although he had possessed both aids, the tide by this time was running too strong against him. All the weight of his cloth, character, and family only served to protect his own head from the passion and prejudice of the people.

The Rector was the one man in the crowd to give in—and it was for the first time in his life. He retreated to the Rectory, but it was to lose no time. In grief and horror he recalled that there was no justice nearer than young Gage of the Mall. He quickly resolved to mount his old hunter, My Lady, and gallop to the Mall, to secure the Squire's concurrence. Then from the Mall he would ride to Reedham, to see if there was a corps

of yeomanry on drill at the market-town, and to beg the chief magistrate and the commanding officer to give him the support he required. He knew that it would be nightfall before he could bring a regular force to Sedge Pond, relieve Grand'mère, and put down the riot. But he was not a man to succumb to despair in the shape of difficulties, or to leave a stone unturned when there were deeds to accomplish. He calculated on the wholesome effect of the honest light of day, and expected that no over-act of violence greater than the insults of last night would be committed without repeated adjournments to the ale-house. He might be in time after all.

In the meanwhile he despatched another message to Grand'mère, giving special instructions to the messenger that he should procure admission to the cottage, and reassure the poor Frenchwomen by informing them of his plans. The messenger was Black Jasper, and he attained his object. Massa's imperative orders, and the irritating treatment which he himself received from

many of his ordinary acquaintance in his progress, urged him on. For the rabble of Sedge Pond were in that fitful, excitable, and exacting humour when small provocation was needed to raise their gorges. Black Jasper's colour, coupled with some inkling of his errand, which they were not so far gone in their work as to stop, was the grievance in this case.

“Another strange crow—a black beetle who mappen had his venom, like the rest of them, for all his pretended softness. He had been mortal quick in taking up with the cottage cattle, and had run at the beck of the old witch every time he had seed her, as gin she had been Pearson's son. To the wall with the grinning blackamoor—whack him out of the village after his friend Mounseer!”

Black Jasper entered the Shottery Cottage in a bath of sweat, and his woolly hair on end in mingled fury and fear. It was clear that he must perforce remain, the only man garrisoning the cottage. He could not face a return to the Rectory, even to obey Massa.

The Rector heard of this detention as he was mounting his horse, and had to quiet Madam and his daughters as he best could ; for Mr. Hoadley chanced to be at the other end of the parish, whither he had been summoned to attend a death-bed. The Rector told himself that it was well, for he would never be able to convince Mr. Hoadley that the assembly was not a congregation got together without any exertion, and to which he would declaim till the yells of the mob drowned his text and murder was committed. The Huguenot women would not be much the stronger for Jasper's manhood, but the fellow was Philip's fellow, and as blindly faithful as any dumb animal. He had obeyed his master at least. But what if Philip's Jasper, one of the few relics of his young captain, came to grief ! The Rector dashed off at the thought more like a dragoon than a black-coat, setting his teeth to keep down his emotion.

Nothing worse happened as yet, but even that was ominous. The lounging, grumbling men, suddenly shook themselves up,

took the garden gate off its hinges, and poured into the garden with a wild whoop. They then set themselves to all manner of mischief about the pond, the bower, and the small miniature alleys and *oseraie*, as if that were all their purpose. This, however, might serve to detain them opportunely till other than moral force was brought to bear upon them; for Monsieur, in pursuance of his own game, had taken care that the Shottery Cottage had massive shutters and strong bolts and bars. So if its occupants would only sit like hares on their form, it could offer as good passive resistance to attack places of far greater importance.

But the performance of the Sedge Pond villagers was not in itself cheering as beheld by the owners of the garden. The bleak spring weather had taken a turn for the better that day; the wind had veered from north-east to south-west, and, blowing softly, was wooing a hundred unsuspected allies—bud and leaflet, and little wakeful tomtit and willow-wren and field-mouse—to come forth and show themselves. It was such a

sweet, hopeful spring day as might make an old woman young again, and such had made Grand'mère young when she had gone abroad and cried out with joy at the sight of the first jonquille and violet, and had sat in the arbour, framed by the periwinkle and ivy, and held the interview with Lady Rolle. The cold, blue-grey periwinkle flowers were in blossom again, and hands, the grime of which Grand'mère had ever respected, were rudely tearing down greenery and framework, while ruthless feet were trampling wilfully among the plants of the strange little colony of caraway, endive, and chicory with which the emigrants had tried to cheat themselves into the belief that their garden was a French garden.

Yolande, peeping sorrowfully out, and witnessing the havoc, was engrossed by it, the more so that in her ignorance she did not feel much fear, till Grand'mère recalled her. Grand'mère had seen such ruin, and worse, of which this apprentice job was but the precursor. But she did not wish to see it again. Besides, she had work to do';

and Grand'mère's spirit had flashed up to meet the occasion. She moved about in the darkened house as nimble as a girl. She gathered round her in the parlour, under one pretence or another, the whole camp—and how small it looked! Staid, surly Prie tossed her head a little, as she had done when Mr. George from the Castle ran away with Ma'mselle. Deb Potts, no more than stimulated by the skirmishing she had engaged in, was eager to seize the rolling-pin or the tongs from the stove, in lieu of Monsieur's fowling-piece, which she was forbidden to handle. Black Jasper—not so much tossing his head like Prie, as staggering unsteadily under the influence of a kind of Dutch courage which kept him up in the meantime—was the most hysterical of the household. Last of all, Yolande stood sad and scornful, for she was at the age when principles are lofty, and faith in human kind has a dash of splendour, in contemplation of jealous misunderstanding, vile ingratitude, and dastardly outrage.

Grand'mère took her cue, and began to

speak of her own old experience—the experience of her sect and nation in wrong and suffering, which Madame her daughter-in-law had so loved to record. She told how Madame de la Force, of the *haute noblesse*, had been shut up for years in a common prison sooner than renounce her creed; how carefully-nurtured young girls of the *bourgeoisie* had lain festering in the hold of a slave-ship bound for the Barbadoes, when a word would have set them free, and restored them to their country and their friends; how Judith Maingault, who had been among the first Huguenot settlers in America, had subsisted six months without bread, enduring hardships under which strong men had fainted and fallen. Most of the company had often before heard the stories, but to a different accompaniment. They had a new meaning from Grand'mère's lips at this season. They caused the shouts of contumely ringing round the Shottery Cottage to sink into a confused murmur, or to change into something like plaudits, when Grand'mère wound up her narrative with the words—

“Yes, my children, we want an evangel for scenes like these, and folk like these, more than we want one that will take in the persecutors. If a philosophy can be found to serve the *spirituelle* and the gracious, let them keep it. I believe not in it; but that goes for nothing. What it is that I want is an evangel for one and all—silly, rude, hardened, gross, cruel; for, see you, though they kill me, I am not so unlike them—not so blameless, noble, sage, tender—that I cannot claim kindred with the offenders, that I cannot call to mind offences of mine which I have committed in my day, little brothers and sisters of their offences.”

“Well-a-day, then, us wants such an evangel a power more than you do, Madame,” chimed in Deb Potts in the name of the convicted listeners.

The afternoon was wearing on. Longer shadows were barring the pure, sweet light falling so strangely on the big men transformed into senseless, reckless children, and invested with a power which they abused to work mischief. The question was whether

the *emeute* would exhaust itself in the trifling demonstration, or whether the taste for destruction, like the taste for blood, would increase with indulgence. There was one of those pauses of hesitation or debate with better and manlier instincts which had characterised the tumult all along; and the household thus marked out and tormented, as they looked and saw the wasted spring-garden half deserted, began to lift up their heads and think their trial was past. But when a fresh band of smock-frocks and towering faces hurried in on the little green stage before the cottage, and a hoarser, more brutal shout than any which had yet been raised, called for the old witch—

“ We want the old witch as bewitches all who come near her, Pearson, and Pearson’s daughter, and Deb Pots. Han’t Deb hersen said ’twere witchcraft, and her good mother bade her ware of it, afore her were taken, and Deb were sold under the spell? We will be bewitched next oursens; there will be ill among our beasteses; there be’t already. Jack Bar’s cow had a turn hinder night.

Sam Hart's colt flung in stable and broke his grey mare's leg. Lance Gill's gander thrust his neck into a cranny on Cliffbeck, and were strangled. Let us see whether the old witch will pretend to cure them. We wunnot abide no more of her doings; we will have her, and her stick with her, and see whether her will sink or swim, that will we"—

Yolande threw herself before Grand'mère, and aghast with impotent anger and terror clung to her, determined that she herself should be seized first, and that nothing should separate the two.

Prie muttered, "They do be in a frenzy," and stared transfixed. Black Jasper gave a great womanish sob, and Deb came forward towering in her height, purple with passion, her teeth set desperately, "A'se go out to them, madam, and eat my words. Dear heart, a' wull. A'se not be forbidden, though they catch and duck me ower and ower. An ill tongue suld be torn out by the roots, Scriptur do say; and a' had an ill tongue that day, but a' knowed no better, as

mother knowed no better. The Lord he do have forgiven her for her ignorance, so you'll forgive me, old Madam, and a'se bear my punishment. Nay, now, it been't by a heap so bad to go out and say, 'You raging tykes, as fact as death a' leed yon time, a' telled a clean, idle lie,' that you, Ma'mselle, as took me in out of the sickness, and took care o' me, and made a 'oman of me, which mother owned with her last breath, and Prie that bore with me, and even this blubbering, engrained thing of a man, should go for to think a' were a beast goin' back to my beastiness, to stand and hear my own wicked words raked up agin you, and not to go out and cast them in the billies' teeth, and gasp out round denials of them, were villagers to ram the denials down the throat o' me."

"Softly, softly," said Grand'mère, in her paleness, seeking to calm Deb. "No, my girl, you shall not go. Nobody will put herself in peril for me. I say it, and I have been accustomed to be obeyed all my life. Ah me, there are few left to obey me, but

you are one of the few, my Debtore, and you will not stir a finger to disabuse the marauders. What will you, when they accuse even a poor stick like Madame Rougeole—the poor, dear Madame, who won her name by the little children's beds, and with whom they were wont to play? But names are not stones, *fifille*, they break no bones. For that matter, the revilings and the caresses are alike in this respect, that one must bestow them, and one must receive them, while the world lasts. 'There is one who kisses, and one who extends the cheek.' Is it not so?"

Deb was forced to submit, but she was discontented and restless, while whistles and vociferated demands for the old witch continued to sound under the very window. In her discomfiture she flew up, fell upon Black Jasper, and snubbed him severely for his disconsolate wail, and the prostration it implied:—

"Gin ye do not give ower that bellering, as is making of my head split, my black babby, that we 'omen be to stand round and

fight for, a'se be rid of that, at least, for a'se march ye out of the outer door straight."

"Oh, mercy, Miss Deb! I cannot help it," protested Black Jasper, wild with a new panic, "no more than you can help your bad words. Forgive me, Miss Deb, that I take the liberty of mentioning them, since you mentioned them fust yourself, and Black Jasper allers follows where the ladies leads. I ain't a-funning now, Miss Deb, I give my word of honour; and I dunnot know a bit what I'm doing for the clatter of that crew. Them tears aire in my constitootion, I 'spose. They will come—allers, and the giggling alongst with them; though I han't much to laugh at, lawks! you knows that as well as I, 'cept it be that my own massa is gone home before me, and p'r'aps he sees that I am here for obeying of his massa; and so he stoop down and say, as he used to speak cheerily afore the furious, bloody battles, 'Courage, Jasper. Why, you oughtn't to have been a boy at all, but a girl; you aire so chicken-hearted. Still we know who 'is true and kind, eh, lad?

It will all be over soon, and the day is ours.' Cap'n Philip may stoop to say that when they're tearing down the house about our ears; and then I'll hold my puffing and panting, though my liver is white, as the whole Rectory kitchen says,—queer that, Miss Deb, when the rest of me is black. I'll stretch a pint, and make out to answer, 'Look here, Cap'n Philip: though I was chicken-hearted, I han't ever failed you, have I? or your massa, or the old lady, not when I could sarve you. So you go quick, Cap'n Philip, and report me to the Gen'r'l.' I'll be precious spent with the fit, Miss Deb, if I don't make out to say that much."

"*Tout doucement*," Grand'mère, who had been silent and thoughtful, had to say again. "It is necessary that a house be not divided against itself either in peace or in war. *Voilà*, you had your own faults to answer for a few minutes ago, my brave Deb. Leave the boy alone. And you, my gay, who were the willing, quaking messenger of Monsieur the Pastor, who does

not know what the quakes say? Go! I have another balm for your woes and your quarrels, though I am not a witch. On the contrary, I have read this in my Bible; and since it is for reading my Bible that I am in this England, it is good that I remember its least little lesson. Not true? After a great saint and apostle, Paul, with his fellow voyagers, had been exceedingly tossed by a tempest during many days, he besought his companions that they should take meat, assuring them that not a hair should fall from the head of any one of them. Let us also break bread and hope in God. But you are young, my children, and I am old—old even by comparison with Big Prie; for I was an anxious woman when she lay smiling in her cradle. There is one advantage which the grey-headed can claim—they have fasted from so many things in their lives, that their sluggish blood and feeble pulses need less renewing than the swift stream in the throbbing veins which nourish the black and brown heads that are still erect and

stately. *Hein*, *Prie*, think of something more available than the madness of the world. Return thanks for your *pot-à-feu*, my fine woman, when your wits and all in the *cuisine* have gone a wool-gathering. I shall watch a little longer here while the rest of the troop, every one, and *Yolande*, the first in order, show the example, and go to the kitchen at the back of the house, out of the sound of the din, and sup the *bouillon* as so many hungry children. I will have it so. I have told you I am always obeyed, and nobody is to begin contradicting me now. What can happen to me? You are all within hearing. I do not dote; I am not infirm; but a capable old woman of my years, the good God be praised for it! I will not be watched or guarded. Chut! It is not polite—it is an intrusion, when you know as well as I that the blessed oaken shutters would keep out a cannon ball. Leave me to my own thoughts; they and I are not so ill-acquainted that I should feel shy of being left alone with them.”

But eager as *Grand'mère* showed herself

to dismiss her circle for rest and refreshment, however slight, she had a special word to say to each in the act. “My Lame,” she detained Prie a moment, “often have you served the *bouillon* for me; you would have gone hungry yourself, *mille fois*, that it might be strong and rich for me, as I taught you to make it, and the *omelettes en chemise*, and the *frottement* and the *cirage* of the floors; I taught you them all. *Oh, ciel!* they were happy lessons these, and one of them will refresh your own heart to-day, and you will live long yet to refresh others. Why, Prie, you are a young girl to me, and I shall leave you in charge of Yolande one of these days.—My Deb”—Grand’mère caught up the remorseful Deb—“my Deb with the tongue—it is a savage beast, that tongue, which no man can tame. Nevertheless, the fear of God in a good heart will tame it.—My boy, fear must not master us, for whether white or black, we have one Master, even Christ, so it is we who ought to master fear, whether it be a sin or a weakness, for He carries

both our transgressions and our infirmities. —Yolandette,” Grand’mère turned wistfully, “you do not grudge that you have let father and mother go unhurt and stayed with me, to meet the retribution? Grudge it never, *petite*—take it for your consolation. It is nearly over now.”

Left alone, Grand’mère remained perfectly still for a few moments, with nothing save her lips moving. Then she began to peep out into the garden and to listen, as she herself would have said, like a lynx, with her head turned towards the back of the cottage and the kitchen. At last she heard the sound she waited for. She got up quietly, and took Madame Rougeole. “They shall have the old witch, Madame and all,” she said to herself. “Madame Rougeole was my mother’s. These carved red-headed sticks were the fashion in her province. Madame Rougeole, in her little coral dress, has been in our family for generations. But the people will not be defrauded of her that the children may go free—they would not long go free other-

wise. I spied a ladder and an axe deposited at the corner of the house. My old eyes are quick to discern such tools; and they may well be so, for they early learnt the look of them, and we return always to our first fear as to our first love. It is better that Madame Rougeole should go with me, for if it come to the worst, the sight of her would only torture Yolandette's poor broken heart. My God, bind up this broken heart; bid these stones rise up and be friends to her; be Thou her friend, and she will want no other."

Grand'mère was making her preparations all the time that she thus murmured to herself and to her God. When they were finished, she stole past the passage which led to the kitchen, and by the withdrawal of a bolt, slipped out into a small out-building attached to the cottage. In it she found an old duffle cloak belonging to Prie, and, on the spur of the moment, put it on, hood and all. It was much too large for her, and she had to gather it round her, and hold it up like a beggar in a cast garment

that had not been made to fit her. But for that reason it was the more appropriate for her purpose, and muffled her more completely. There was no back entrance from the street, back entrances being among the superfluities of the age. She must make her way out by the one little yawning gateway from the garden, if she was determined to break the Rector's prohibition. She did mean this, and she had availed herself of the moment when the foes were clustered like bees in the porch, those who remained without being stragglers engaged in putting the last touch to the demolition of the young plum and peach trees already powdered with blossom. If she moved quickly in the shadow of the wall, and did not stop for breath, or falter and look back, she might slip out when all heads were turned in an opposite direction, and get fused and melted among other grey cloaks worn by hangers-on on the outskirts in the village streets.

The brave old woman accomplished her end, and found herself, unsuspected, among the motley smock-frocks, tattered aprons,

and disreputable false sailors' jackets. What refuge should she aim at? The Rectory? It was at the other end of the village, and she could not hope to pass so far without being remarked upon, accosted, and detected. And she would carry a firebrand to the Rectory in the absence of its master, while she would be leaving so many sheep—her own sheep—among the wolves. Nay, she had not quitted her own household in ruins to carry ruin to another; she had not deceived her people and Yolande, and broken faith with them, for such an end. She had not so learnt motherhood, Huguenotism, and Christianity. She made for the alehouse itself.

“If I give myself up,” Grandmère reasoned, “the villagers will spare my child and my servants. At least there will be delay; and the pastor will return with forces in time to save them. If I give myself up, the villagers may relent, and think what have I done to make them hate me so. If not, it is but the pouring out of the last drop of a mortal life from which the flavour

is gone, since my son was compelled to leave me. And it is to ransom my darling, though it break her tender heart to begin with."

Happily Grand'mère knew thoroughly every step of the littered way, every bend that it took past sluttish sodden cottages, every ascent to manure heaps, and descent to draw-wells; her old feet could have trodden it comfortably had she been blindfolded. The hubbub and confusion of the unusual concourse were in her favour, for while on any ordinary occasion she could not have traversed the same distance on a spring afternoon without being remarked as a stranger in her old cloak, as it was, she was sufficiently mistress of herself to abstain from any act in flagrant discord with her general appearance. She took a circuit of Deb Potts's mother's house, and other hovels where she had fought the Sedge Pond sore throat, and at length arrived opposite the overgrown blooming red-brick building, with every avenue thrown wide open. Skittle-ground, bowling-green, and cock-pit were

deserted on this day, with its first promise of summer. The objects to be seen at the end of the outlets were sloppy tables, surrounded with lolling, loud-tongued men, scarcely less hot, and consumed by their own heat, than the great blazing fires which lighted up each brown room, and flickered fantastically on the faces of each company of besotted conspirators.

Grand'mère was looking about for a side door by which she had entered when she had on a former occasion visited the ale-house. She stood still, for the first time doubtful where to go, but not without taking the precaution to draw herself away into the shelter of the beech hedge of the forsaken skittle-ground, when a hand was laid on her cloak from behind.

She gave a great start at the arresting touch, followed by a greater start, and then an audible *miséricorde* ; but there was none to hear her save the arrester.

It was Yolande, who, quick to penetrate Grand'mère's plot, had run at her kinswoman's heels with only the dark skirt of her

gown drawn over her head to hide her identity. Grave and pale, Yolande flushed like a child, almost exultant at not having been left behind and outdone.

“ You could not cheat me, you could not get away from me, Grand’mère. What should I have said to my father and my mother if you had gone without me? Bah! I am your young recruit, *ma mère*, whom you enlisted an age ago, and what have I done that you should try to get rid of me?—that you should think me a *poltronne* to hold back when you lead the way?”

For once in her life Grand’mère wrung her hands at the disobedience of Yolande.

“ What is it that you have done, unfortunate one? Is there to be no young hostage recovered from the wreck for the poor fugitives who were persuaded to go? My heart bleeds for them, for Hubert, for Philippine.”

But even while Grand’mère spoke, it became evident that remonstrance and return were too late for Yolande. An indefinite intuition, a vague doubt was working itself


into a certainty, and changing into the muttering of baffled exasperation. There would be no farther protraction of the business, or any lingering for dusk to veil the cruelty and shame of its completion. Pricked on, feet and hands would plant the ladder and wield the axe in the provocation of the revenge which was to have been so sweet—the perpetrators feeling that, in their clumsy tardiness, revenge and prey were alike slipping through their fingers. There would be brief bandying of rough words with the women-servants and Black Jasper, ere the three were gagged and tied to buffet and bed-post, with the doors double locked upon them, and the full stream of the riot surging on the track of Grand'mère and Yolande.

“I meant to give an old, travel-stained, worn-out offering,” confessed Grand'mère; “but it was not worthy, there must be another—the best we have to present of the youth and the flower of the stock. I thought to buy life for my child, but God says, ‘No, it must be death,’ for that is purer and

sweeter with an immortal purity and sweetness, and God knows best. Ah! well, Yolande, we will go in and announce ourselves and deliver ourselves together. There is one thing, see you, we will purge those floors for ever of their rude grossness; they will not have the heart for it, they will have the fear of it, after the glory of what we will do."

## CHAPTER XII.

*Sedge Pond's Love to Grand'mère.*

HE turmoil in the village street was concentrated in the passages of the alehouse. The motliest parties of women, as well as of men, were tugging and tearing their way there. But even there, opportune little lanes opened occasionally. Taking one of these at the moment it presented itself, Grand'mère and Yolande, half walking and half borne on by the pressure around them, struggled up the very centre of the kitchen before their entrance was called in question.

“Messieurs,” said Grand'mère, suddenly, in quavering but gallant accents, which broke like a thunder-clap through the brawling and blustering of the conspirators, “here I am, my granddaughter Yolande, and my

stick, as you sought. It is better that I should come into the midst of you of my own will, than that you should batter the Shottery Cottage to the ground, to the anger of my lady and the loss of a new tenant, and only have my body, after all, like that of a crushed rat from under the stones. Here I am, to give an account of myself, with all that intimately belongs to me; for you would not abuse yourselves to punish the poor domestics, your own countrywomen, the lacquey of Monsieur, your Rector. What is your will, my friends, who call yourselves my enemies?"

Silence followed Grand'mère's appeal, broken but by the rattling of mugs and cans, as foot nudged foot, and elbow jogged elbow, and by the rustling of shagged heads, and nodding of flushed faces, and the blast of many breaths drawn simultaneously.

"Dickens," even Master Swinfen, the bragging, unscrupulous landlord, found nothing farther to splutter out, "who'd e'er ha'e thought it? What can ha'e brought the women here, unless they knowed that I'd

like no hand laïd on them on the premises? It ain't in my power to say more; but I shan't go for to offer them seats."

"They've knowed that you'd not like no violence in the house, Mat,"—his wife stuck out her scraggy neck, and distilled her drops of vinegar. "They seek to *sorn* on your protection, the cunning Jews; but they've been a-long of coming, they and the whole race of them—tell 'em that."

"Nay, now, what a speerit be in the witch," burst out a countryman, in sheer extremity of wonder, "to think she be a dame like another, and as old as Grandmother! The speerit of Sarten hissen mun be in her."

"Go!" Grand'mère answered the observation with quick wit. "I show you your yellow beak. You read your Scriptures ill. 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,' your Scriptures say—is it not so? On the contrary, you have resisted me, and behold I am come among you."

As yet no hand had been put on Grand'mère and Yolande, and no challenge ad-

dressed to them. It seemed as if this boldness and innocence would, by a master-stroke of daring and confidence, disarm their antagonists, and win the day.

Grand'mère thought so, and her Gallic spirit rose higher, and her Gallic tongue shaped its words anew into ready, shrewd, epigrammatic sentences, not suspecting that they were so many pearls of speech cast before swine. "But why have you gone to surround me, messieurs, my friends? What is it that you have to say to me? It is necessary that I do not tap my mule in vain. Let us clear up the difference—let us examine into the ground of dispute. Here I am, waiting, dying of the wish and the hope to remove it—pack it up, and send it away across the seas. We may dispense with the four beggars of conversation—the wind, the rain, the sun, the moon—in such circumstances, and strike to the heart of the matter at once. What have I done?"

"What ha'e ye not done?" the growl arose, as the swine turned upon her to rend her, in that deceptive slowness of thought,

and speech, and action, which first crawled, and then leapt, at their conclusion—"You and the man of you ha'e used us as decoys and blinds—ha'e robbed and abused us. Where be our King's Bounty, that ye ha'e battened on with your courts and stews, your coaches, your brocards, and taffities, while we and the loikes of we ha'e been morling and starving on groats and in drugget? Good enough for the loikes of we, my measters; while furrin trash, as could never meet us in fair fight, were a-riding ower our heads, and a-kicking up their heels, and a-mocking of us! And that were not all; but ye mun poke and worm into our wil-lage, and castle, and rectory—nobbut our pig-styes, and larn all we ha'e and all we do for to tell tales to base adventurers, loike your sons and swaggering land and sea captains. And as that were not all, neither, and more by a deal than honest flesh and blood could stand, but ye mun seek to pisen and play your cantrips on us and our beasteses with your possets and your plais-ters, and your cussed wags and winks."

With each additional charge, the clenched hands rang louder on the table; the eyes, as they stared at Grand'mère and Yolande, widened and widened, until the speakers half rose, bent and swayed nearer to the two women.

Grand'mère looked from one blinded, besotted face to another, completely taken aback. "Do you believe this?" she remonstrated at last. "Me who wished only to do you good? I swear it. But how I have deceived myself!" Her words were unheard, unheeded. There was a rush, a sweep of hulking giants, muddled with beer, fired with gin, smarting under the galling burden of huge wrong, with which they had loaded themselves. If some of their own number had not stumbled and tripped up others, they would have borne down Grand'mère and Yolande, and trodden them under their iron heels on the spot. There was a scuffle, a shriek, but there was time to think of treating Grand'mère and Yolande in the orthodox fashion. "Drive 'em alongst the street where they flaunted, drive 'em loike the cattle they be,

pluck their borrowed plumes off their false backs, duck 'em among the newt and the fish they are so fond on, in their own stew—an old harridan—a dulciny—hussies—thieves—traitors—furriners !”

Grand'mère and Yolande were caught, hustled, and dragged towards the door. Master Swinfen interposed no farther to keep the peace than to call out in hypocritical solemnity, “I takes all good people to witness that them French Madames came into this here house will he, nill he, and that they depart without thanks to me for their dismissal.”

“Amen,” responded Mistress Swinfen officiously, in the character of a clerk.

Grand'mère prayed one imploring prayer to her persecutors, “Are there no fathers and mothers here to have pity on a young girl? You men and women, whose daughters I—yes, I saved you—is there not one to save my child?”

And Yolande, in an agony, urged in turn, “Spare Grand'mère—the grey-headed woman. We go with you, we do not think to

refuse, but force her not to move so fast, she cannot walk like that. Have you no old women of your own? Think you not to grow old yourselves, the youngest and strongest of you?"

There was no retreating. There were only taunts of, "Where be your own man, your Mounseer, the plunderer, smuggler, gallows-bird, as cut and run and left you to your deserts?—sure he knew your price. Where be his Honour Master Lushington, and his Worship Master Hoadley, as you beguiled for a season, and my lady's son, and Master George, and the Rectory family, as you had debauched an' you could? Your grand friends had as lief not be by, the day." The rough ribaldry of the men was hideously travestied by the women and the children. If there were any of the inhabitants of Sedge Pond who thought better of what the devil had tempted them to, and drew back into their houses, and looked out scared and horrified at the extent of their outrage, they were too late to do any good by their change of mind, and they shrank

from the odium of expressing the change.

The two women spoke no more, save to each other.

“The gutter is low, Yolande, but Heaven is high.”

“Yes, Grand’mère, it is very high—would that it were not so high!”

“It will soon be near, poor *petite*.”

They prayed no more, save to Him who can hear in the roar of the street rabble as in the peace of the best oratory on a mountain side—among ruthless assailants as among rapt fellow-worshippers.

After all, it was only the mobbing, or, at the worst, the ducking of two Huguenot women, left behind by their natural protector, about the time when prime ministers—Lord North for one—were rolled in the London mud. There was nothing grand, lurid, or ghastly, hardly anything picturesque, in the crime and its accessories. The squalid village street, the stupid, besotted smock-frocks, with the individual figures of Grand’mère and Yolande soon lost in the mass, and over all the quiet, pale, misty English

light, made up the picture. The whole affair was like one of those common-place, every-day, drudging lives, which we have all along slighted, till a test is suddenly applied, and we start back self-condemned, self-abased, and a little awed, because we had been so near holy ground, and did not so much as guess it. For what we called common-place and every-day—that was our humanity, the drudgery was devotion, and the unobtrusive stillness and cool colouring were as the effect of the moon's rays when it calms and tones down, as well as purifies and glorifies the loud, glaring earth. And the test which opened our sealed eyes was the unexpected ending of the unvalued lives, the deaths endured steadfastly, and for duty's sake.

And, alas! though Yolande could make the stormy progress, and hold the young life which still abounded in its strength within her, the old life, which had come through much, and borne a brave and bright front to this day, was running out and sinking low, by the time she was pulled,

jostled, and thrust back to the Shottery Cottage, its entrance gateless now, its garden spoiled, and its pond a pool.

Hours before all this, the Rector had ridden to the Mall and found that the young Squire had gone on business to Reedham, where he followed, and overtook Mr. Gage in the market-place.

“I have been across to the Mall to see you, Squire,” announced the Rector.

And Caleb expressed his regret at having missed the visit, wondering in his private mind to what cause he should attribute the honour of so special a call.

“I must have your concurrence to get a detachment of yeomen to gallop over to Sedge Pond. The village is in an uproar, and I am no longer able to bring the country people to reason single-handed,” proceeded the Rector.

The season for burning ricks was not come, but an indistinct vision of doggedly local frays between village and village presented itself to Caleb Gage’s imagination,

and he thought of his father's object in life, and the power of his memory in these parts, and fancied the remedy disproportionate to the evil. He was inclined to try other means and personal venture before proceeding to desperate blood-letting and putting in irons.

“Had we not better ride over together, and try a little expostulation first? If we give the wild set a little time to cool down, and not come so hard and fast upon them, would it not be better?” suggested the young man.

“I don't know what you call coming hard and fast upon them, sir, or how much time you mean to give to a wild set to wreak their heathen savageness,” protested the Rector in bitter impatience, as he recalled his own delusion of saying “back” to the flood of ignorant prejudice and intemperate rage, and expecting to see the proud waves recede at his bidding before his prouder eyes. “They are my parishioners, and I should know them. If we do not look sharp, I tell you, a pack of curs will worry

and throttle a few harmless sheep in the person of the fine old French Madame and her family."

The Rector had no further need to stir up his hearer. The words sent Caleb Gage, the whiter and sterner of the two, to demand the yeomen to be put under the command of the Rector and him. Nay, Caleb Gage did not wish to wait for the astonished farmers and clothworkers to put themselves into their accoutrements, so that they might start with their jingling spurs and ringing bridles,—he would have gone off like the wind himself to cope with the mob alone. It was all that the Rector could do to detain his coadjutor under assurances of the comparative immunity of Grand'mère and her household within Shottery Cottage till night-fall. The Rector wanted the weight of the Squire of the Mall's support to stimulate the zeal of the patriotic yeomen now called out to redress a public wrong, for this was no case of smashed machinery and invaded barns—with which native clothworkers and farmers could mutually sympathise. It was

a mere brush at a nest of rascally foreigners, who had already come under the ban of the government ; so that these English beef-eaters, half informed and hugely indifferent, would have been quite inclined to leave the Sedge Pond villagers to finish their work without any troublesome interference on their part. What helped the Rector was that the question was not one of marauders who might be left to defend themselves, but of a handful of women ; and though British gorges could swallow a good deal in the shape of devastation where foreigners were concerned, the most bull-headed among them revolted at this mean morsel.

Towards sunset, while the low beams of the sun still fell broad on Sedge Pond, the Rector and Caleb Gage, with their company of yeomen, clattered into the empty street. The normal state of the village was so sluttish and squalid that no additional mark of ill-doing and disorder made much impression upon it. But the vacation of the place even by women and children was suspicious. "There is some mischief afloat at the cot-

tage," cried the Rector, excitedly, while Caleb Gage's pale face flushed fiery red, "but it is impossible they can have gone to extremity." The gap where the garden gate had stood was discovered the moment the force came in sight of the Shottery Cottage, but the cottage itself, save for its shattered windows and closed shutters, which the Rector had seen in the morning, presented no change and offered no sign. If the convulsive sobs of Black Jasper, the gushing sighs and the hollow groans of Prie, and the denunciations and vociferations of Deb to be let out to eat her words and fight frantically for her old Madame and her young Ma'mselle, were resounding within the walls, they did not reach the ears of the coming rescuers.

But when the riders looked over the garden wall, they saw a repulsive sight enough. The little garden lay before them swarming with smock-frocks, not pressing towards the house, but standing round the fish-pond. Its stone margin was shattered, its waters troubled, and it was covered with circles and bells of foam. The crowd was startled by the mea-

sured beat of the horses' feet. The clink and clash of the riders' arms were sounds not totally unfamiliar. Some of the countrymen present had heard the ominous interlude when the smoke from the smouldering cocks of hay and sheaves of corn was polluting the fresh fields. The gang, actors and spectators, stopped the occupation on which they had been intent, and presented to the yeomen and their leaders a small sea of rabid faces. But the foremost figures did not let go their two prisoners. Two women, with their clothes torn and dripping, were seen standing and sinking down in the mud. Murder might, ere now, have been committed on the principal offender, if one fierce and stalwart man had taken upon him the execution of the deed. But when a crowd of delirious men tried it all at once, so that the criminal, whose venerable, feeble limbs had bent so often to her God, and to no other, had to go down several times into the water to receive her last baptism of humiliation and death, the business was neither so mercifully brief nor thorough.

Caleb Gage at once sprang from his horse, but the Rector sat at the head of his yeomen and waved his hand, delivering his orders, "Let go these ladies; stop this work, I say, or, as sure as I am a man of peace, and an ordained priest, and you the barbarians I have been accustomed to call my people, the yeomen behind me shall ride in and cut down every man of you!"

The scum of the Sedge Pond villagers were as far from cowards as from saints. But the instinctive shrinking of all disorderly masses, from anything like a trained band, governed by law and duty, soon showed itself. The square towers of yeomen, sitting there, with frowning brows under their helmets, and their hands clenched in their gauntlets, when they were brought to close quarter with so villainous a job as this, held the sway of masters over labourers.

The smock-frocks fell back a little with a grim, surly awkwardness of concession; their staring, blood-shot eyes blinking uneasily at the speaker. But before the people could do more, before the piercing cry of

Yolande, "Monsieur Caleb! Caleb Gage! for my sake, save Grand'mère!" could reach Caleb, Grand'mère herself had heard the voice of a friend, and raising herself on the arms of her gaolers and executioners, who were forced to hold her still that she might slide to the ground, announced eagerly in accents audible enough for those around her to hear, "Monsieur the Rector, I am here, neither killed nor wounded; slay nobody for me."

They were the last coherent words which Grand'mère ever spoke. She fell back after the effort and sank into unconsciousness. Her strength ebbed rapidly away during the hours that she survived, notwithstanding that help of every sort was at hand. All that remorseful pity and tenderness, all that friendship and devotion, could do, was done. Carried into her own house, laid on her home bed, she was lovingly waited on by her people and her child. The leechcraft of a country clergyman like the Rector and a young Squire, bred as Caleb Gage had been, was at her service. The old

Squire's friend, the good Reedham doctor, who liked to attend by the sick-beds of the Methodists because they died well, was brought over, but he could only shake his head and say that he could do nothing. A mighty deal more than he could do had been done for so brave and sweet a martyr. Madam from the Rectory came to watch by her, and Milly and Dolly Rolle to weep their eyes out for her; and Mr. Hoadley was here too, the great tears diminishing the light of his own big black eyes with the injunction, "Weep not for the blessed dead, but the miserable living," on his tongue. The old Frenchwoman in her last moments was looked on with more yearning and reverence than any lady or queen could have been, notwithstanding that she died of the maltreatment dealt to the lowest of her kind, and awarded to her by the men and women among whom she had dwelt, and whom she had served with her best.

After sense was gone, and while speech remained, Grand'mère rambled characteristically. Now her imagination was full of

one of the great hunts in her native forests, and of the *halili* resounding through the glades for a royal boar. Again she was comforting her son for her fate, "I suffered it with all my heart for you, Hubert; only be you ready for me." Then she was recalling and summing up promise after promise to which she had clung, and as if they had never failed her—an escape from the windy storm and tempest, a tabernacle to be hidden in from the strife of tongues, the hills to which she would lift her eyes and from whence should come her aid. Grand'mère's last words were to Yolande, "But, *pauvrette*, it is well—wait."

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Men's Ways and God's Ways.*

EVERYBODY was sorry for Yolande. Everybody was good to her. It was as if the electricity long latent in a sultry atmosphere had exhausted itself in a great storm, and the air was not only clear and fresh at last, but the sun, and the south wind, and the soft rain were all fain to lift up, refresh, and restore the beaten down, broken herbage. It was as if the world had suddenly become aware of a great debt incumbent on it to pay, and Yolande the sole creditor—a great amends to make, and she the only receiver.

True, there were hulking, creeping figures of men and women, who turned into their houses, and skulked behind their doors in the summer sunshine, when Yolande passed

along. There were men and women who removed from Sedge Pond, and betook themselves to other localities, unable to bear the silent reproach of the simple presence of one who was more forlorn than an orphan among them. And these whilom villagers, carrying their consciences full of perilous stuff, went from bad to worse, and waxed reprobate. But, as a rule, the remorse of Sedge Pond for the consummation of wrong to the Dupuys, took the turn of repentance.

“Nay, them weren’t so bad as they were called, not by a long chalk,” the village worthies assured each other, first sneakingly, and then boldly, with rueful shakes of the head and compunctious groans. “They wouldn’t ha’e been so game when they came to be mauled. We’re free to bet they be of the right sort as has that kind of might of patience—ne’er a squale nor a curse atween the two. Nay, but eh! Lord! her as was done for bade Pearson hold yeomen’s swords. Heard ye that, lads? And it were gospel that her were cruel kind to

we in the sickness long since. How could we go to try what we did? We ought to be black ashamed of ourselves, for ever and a day ;” and deep shame, softened by a wish to do better, broke the hard hearts of the villagers.

The old autocracy of the ale-house came rapidly down, until the ale-house itself reformed, and its worst features were blotted out by universal consent.

With the family at the Rectory Yolande in her desolation found a temporary shelter, and Madam coddled her as a child of her own ; for Grand’mère had been good to Madam’s Milly in her trouble, the Milly who had come well through it all, and was soon to be the honoured wife of a young clergyman. The couple were preparing to set up house together at the Corner Farm, and would fain have begged, borrowed, or stolen Yolande as a guest, to whom hospitality was a sacred duty, and the entertainment of whom would bring a blessing with it ; while the Squire of the Mall would have given his life to have afforded her another

and a lasting refuge. And seeing that Milly and Mr. Hoadley were showing other young people so good an example, it did not seem as if it would have been unnatural or unbecoming in the circumstances, had Yolande Dupuy, submitting to what were at last the well-known and accredited wishes of the Squire, laid aside her mourning, for one day, and made one visit to the Sedge Pond church, thus providing two sweet and serious-minded brides instead of one. In this case it was judged correctly that Monsieur and Madame, from their remote Huguenot refuge in the Americas, compelled as they were to bow to the most terrible blow which could have befallen them, would acquiesce thankfully in the completion of the settlement which Grand'mère had herself proposed for her child.

Prie and Deb, persuaded that they had received a last commission to this effect from Grand'mère, were proposing to follow Yolande's fortunes wherever her wandering footsteps might lead her. Even Black Jasper, holding always his main duty to the Rectory

family, hovered, like a member of Yolande's staff—far from unattached in the sense of the affections—round the grandchild of the beautiful old lady who had noticed him and been kind to him, and whose name he could no more mention without a copious effusion of grateful and enthusiastic tears, than he could mention that of Captain Philip without the characteristic tribute. And there was this other point of union between Black Jasper and Yolande, that while the soft fellow had picked up an acquired taste for a quality at the moral antipodes to his own—the severe criticism of Deb Potts—he had at the same time an immense sympathy with Ma'mselle, whom he regarded as under a perpetual exposure to this rasping, ruffling influence.

Yolande was made more of than she had ever been before. The very weather petted her, for the tardy, fitful spring burst into a serenely beautiful summer, with a radiance and exuberance tempered as if to meet the needs of aching hearts and weary eyes. Yet, underlying all the loving-kindness

which God and man lavished upon her, there was a piteousness, which Yolande put away from her sometimes, wringing her hands because it only gave her a deeper realization, a fuller comprehension of the extent of her loss.

“ Oh ! my friends, do not have such pity for me ! Neglect, thwart, blame me as formerly, and then I shall not, on all sides, in every beating of my heart, feel that Grand'mère is gone for ever from this world. You are very good, but none of you, nor the earth, nor the sky, is Grand'mère. Yes, I know it well, she is a glorified spirit ; but I—I am, and may be for as long a time as she was in the body, only a poor, weak, sinful, mortal woman. I did everything with Grand'mère—I was always with Grand'mère. You cannot think, you good people, who live simply for God and your fellow-creatures, and are otherwise self-sufficing and independent, or who have your hearts spread over many friends—how I shiver in my loneliness, and shriek in my mutilation, even though He be with us in

His grace alway to the end of the world."

Yes, Yolande needed every solace to bring her back to life, for was she not bereft indeed? It belonged to her nature that in the comparative negation of a French girl's personality, she had been bound up in Grand'mère—that she had lived a dual and not a single life—that in almost everything she had been associated and identified with the noble and sweet old woman who was gone to kindred spirits; and that not even her attachment to Caleb Gage, visionary and romantic as it had been, had broken the union. Therefore, though Yolande was godly, reverent, true, tender, a fair scholar in Grand'mère's school of meekness, and a daughter and heiress of Grand'mère's in the gift of wide sympathy and inexhaustible hopefulness, she could not help feeling as if part of her nature was at once buried in the earth and flown to the skies—as if there was a yawning chasm always open before her feet, with the blue distance a complete blank. She sickened in spirit, and drooped in heart and mind, and wore black in soul

as well as in body for the earthly, human deprivation of Grand'mère, until her friends feared for her, that she would not recover from the blow and loss, but would wither under them, if not die, a martyr to natural affection, which is liable to weakness and morbidness in its anguish, for the very reason that it is less than divine; and so men, not God (thank Heaven, never God!), call it idolatry.

“After all that has been said, to make no farther way—it is very disheartening. I declare, I am afraid it is a bad job.”

“Then, sir, I conclude you think I had better give it up?”

The speakers were the Rector and Squire Gage, who had fraternised to such an extent lately, that the Rector had just arrested the Squire, a little against his will, on his road to the Rectory, and set him down at the table which, in fine weather, stood over against the holly-hedge, where the Rector was wont to smoke his afternoon pipe, and drink his glass of claret or Madeira, and

study his fortnightly newspaper and his correspondence. And here Madam would bring her fine stitching, and be informed and enlightened by her lord and master on whatever matters of public or parish interest he should judge to be within her capacity. This was the age for men reading to women; and whatever ideas, outside the women's private experience, got into their heads, and simmered and made little ebullitions from these thinly-tenanted settlements, they had the men to thank or to blame for them.

It was a day such as that on which Grand'mère and the Sedge Pond villagers had had their last encounter, and put the final seal to their intercourse. Only the silvery light of spring had become the golden light of summer. For dim, blue, scentless periwinkles in dark green ivy, there were now vivid roses, heavy with all sweetness in the rich russet of their leaves, orange flame of lilies, ripe oaten straws and honeysuckle, and nothing cold but the blossoms of the jessamine, which show among com-

panion flowers like stars seen by day, and which need a background of night or age to bring out their purity, peacefulness, trustfulness.

All over the meads and the uplands, the Castle woods and the very Waäste—which Caleb Gage knew and loved with a power and an intensity of appreciation which is like an additional faculty of soul and charm of existence to some men and women—there were the same seasonable efflorescence and bounty for beast, and bird, and insect. Herds standing in the river lowed, and flocks on the wing warbled and sang, and bees hummed, filling the great plain and the whole row of hives with the murmur of the sea, as if all nature united, and did well to unite, and say, that the winter was gone and the summer was come, and it depended on God to repair the breaches of the past, and give back what was lost in the future. For though Captain Philip had been shot at Ticonderoga, and Grand'mère done to death in the village street, they but slept the sleep of the justified, to awake and rise again in

the fulness of life, at the restitution and fruition of all things. It was inanimate nature, and nature in the lower animals, which were first resigned to this travail and afterwards content, even ravished. Humanity came last, where it was resigned at all. As for the Rector's words, which had rather been a reflection spoken aloud, than a speech addressed to his friend, they sounded nearer pettish despair. Mr. Philip Rolle started at their instant application, and laughed a little.

"I did not mean your suit," he explained, "I meant the spiritual condition of my parish—mine, which if any man invaded during the last five-and-twenty years, I held him as a moral and spiritual poacher, an unauthorised social depredator. And the end on't is, that after holding forth in the church for a good quarter of a century, baptising, marrying, burying, I have lived to lead a detachment of yeomanry to put down—too late to prevent—the most craven atrocity perpetrated in my time."

"I suppose all men are alike in doing their work after fashions which they little

expected to follow?" replied Caleb, with a smothered sigh of relief. "Who would have said to John Wesley—Mr. John, as my father used to call him—when he was the honoured Fellow of an Oxford college, or to his father before him, when he was one of the most loyal clergymen of the Church of England, that the day would come when, standing on the father's tombstone, because the son was forbidden admittance to the church where his own brother-in-law officiated, the learned scholar and punctilious priest should exhort thousands of lawless disciples?"

"I should not have said it, certainly," accorded Mr. Philip Rolle, a little stiffly, and hastened to go on. "And I suppose my dear old Madame could never have guessed the ignominy and cruelty which we had in store for her, else she would have gone with her precious son. Now that we have made an end of her, and see her and her task in the clearness of a history that is finished—good Lord! what a devout, generous soul! what a magnanimous, gentle life was hers!

If Lushington vows in the open market that the horrid crime is enough to make him shut the 'Rolle Arms,' what can I do with the church here?"

"What will you think of me, sir," asked Caleb Gage in return, in the sternness of self-condemnation, "when I tell you that, in spite of my father's remonstrances, I saw nothing in old Madame Dupuy but the traces of a meddlesome, affected, fantastic old woman, till I had offended her so grievously that I could not presume to intrude into her presence. I can believe, now, how like Yolande she was."

"Or, rather, where Yolande got her fine qualities from," the Rector corrected him. "You were hugely wrong in your first opinion. In spite of Grand'mère's French acuteness and fineness of tact, she was the most guileless old woman I ever knew. She could not credit the bitter badness of evil—witness how the quality of my kindred, to their shame be it spoken, had her undone; she was the cleverest of the set—cleverer even than my lady; but they got

the better of her whenever they sought to do it, and always would, in a way. This moan for her is easily made, too"—and the Rector, in his exasperation, took a letter of my lady's from his pocket, and read out a passage of it—" 'So the *bourgeoise* De Seigné has been mobbed and trodden out of this world. I may be wrong, but I think the original was better bred, and would have stood more misuse. I should like to see the mob who would maltreat me. But I don't deny that it was a monstrously shocking end. How could the Sedge Pond villagers bring it about to the beautiful old woman? Only, you know, Philip, that she went in for being an enthusiast and a saint, which was working for the persecution that befell her.' " The Rector crumpled up the letter, and read no farther, although Lady Rolle had written on boldly, "Whatever punishment I may meet, I never pretended to be any better than my neighbours. And I am growing an old woman now, with my very sons turning upon me. There's George on the top of his marriage with that woman,

Gerty Lowndes, though he knows that I'll never speak to one or t'other of them after it. For the fox and wolf, Heneage, he would fain rout me out of the shoes he wants to fill ; but he shan't while there is breath in my body, and I'll keep it there as long as I can, to spite my dutiful son. These are my wages, and Grand'mère, poor wretch, had hers ; that is all there is to be said."

In the meantime, the Rector was re-filling his pipe, and making an apology, "I beg your pardon, my good fellow, if I don't seem to sympathise with your contrition. I must say that your lamentable mistake is rather a consolatory fact to a hot-headed, high-handed old sinner like myself, being, as it is, a crying instance of how good people misread and vilify each other's credentials. We must wait for the light of another world to spell them out correctly, and to consent freely to range ourselves in the same company. Even death, opening the door for a moment, helps us," echoed the Rector, pricked in his conscience by the recollection of how long the good Squire of

the Mall had been to him as a heathen, and how he had needed, before he could feel his obstinate hostility melting away, to go to the Squire's funeral feast, see with his own eyes the good works which should follow the dead man, where no other possessions could find a place; hear the widows, the orphans, and the outcast weeping, and telling what Squire Gage had done for them; grasp the hand of the chief mourner, and think of his own son Philip, who was spared mourning for him.

"But you had as lief keep your own counsel on this little matter," added the Rector, after a pause. "It is a marvel that poor Yolande can abide the sight of any of us, or of the very houses and fields even. For her sake, as well as yours, my friend, I should be right glad to speed your wooing."

"I believe you would; and I am more obliged for that than for any other token of your regard," acknowledged Caleb; "but I must tell you, I mean to tell everything to Yolande," he declared, steadily.

The Rector looked askance at the step.

“What! wound a poor thing wounded already, in what looks like mere wantonness and fatality,—damage your own cause, for no purpose but to satisfy some overstrained scruple, selfish in its origin and effect. Pardon me, Squire, I thought you had more common sense and self-mastery. However, you are at liberty to manage your own affair as you think proper. You ought to know, and I daresay the women would say that I was a sorry adviser in such a case,” he broke off, with a shrug of his shoulders.

“You have given me good advice before now; you have been a good friend to me and to Yolande, which is far more, sir. But I cannot help telling her everything. It may have been my father’s way with my mother; or I may have learned the trick from long listening to what he never passed a day without alluding to. No one could live with my father and not hear of his first and best friend. I don’t think I have much chance. I fancy Yolande is only waiting for the opportunity of joining her father

and her mother, and not caring much even for that. I know it is not quite right in her, but only consider how fond she was of the old woman whom you describe as a saint as well as a martyr, and how she was deprived of her. Yet I don't suppose Yolande hates any of us—least of all the place where her friend's body is laid to rest. And though she cares for the dust, she could leave it, because, as it was put into the garner without will and power of hers, so it cannot suffer farther desecration or be lost, though it should be scattered to the four winds. Yolande will never have any man for her husband, or consent to fill any relation in life for which she does not care; and she has no feeling except weariness. But even though I ran ten times more risk, I cannot help it—I must confess to Yolande my brutal prejudice, dulness, and doggedness, and what they cost me. Perhaps," he added, with a desperate sigh, "after she hears me, she will not wonder so much that there were caitiffs and murderers in Sedge Pond who could lift their hands

against such women ; and for our very lowness and loss she may pity us."

"You are infected, man," represented the Rector. "I don't mean to say that you are not upright and honourable, a very good neighbour and Squire, and a member of my church of whom I may be proud, and from whom I may receive a lesson ; but I protest all the same that you are infected with ultra-liberal and Quixotic notions. Madam Gage—if you get her—will be lifted clean out of her sphere, and have her head turned—luckily it is a notably reasonable head for a woman, like that of her poor blessed Grand'mère. As you are determined to cut your own throat, as the saying is, the next thing is to provide you with as many occasions for the deed as possible, and send you at once to the silly girls in the garden—hey?" suggested the Rector, not much shaken in his conviction that Caleb, in his infatuation, was going the road to ruin his prospects with Yolande—provoked at it, too, sorry for it, yet somehow feeling called upon, as the kindest of human crea-

tures feel in their neighbours' concerns of this description, to turn round and make a joke of this alone of all troubles.

Caleb could not see the propriety of the joke, but he accepted the Rector's invitation, and went to seek the girls and his fate in the Rectory garden.

Caleb Gage had become more familiar with girls than when he sat first with Yolande in the Shottery Cottage parlour, and mistook her shyness for pride, her fine intelligence and natural attainments for pedantry and French polish. But he had not lost, and would never lose his habit of thinking of girls as his sisters, who might have grown up with him, and brightened and beautified indefinitely what had not been an unhappy and unsocial youth at the Mall. He could not help remarking now how the Rectory girls became the Rectory garden, and seemed to fall into their proper places among its sunny sloping strawberry banks, its shady miniature orchards, its aromatic herb-beds, and its tufts of honest, sweet old English flowers, with characteris-

tic English names, from Sweet William to heart's-ease, which, instead of disdaining their humble surroundings, flourished amazingly in them. Caleb built a castle in the air of the restoration of the Mall garden, and then thought how not only one corner formally set apart for an Eden, but the whole Mall would prove a wilderness if he did not win the Eve he sought.

Milly and Dolly Rolle were superintending Black Jasper pulling cherries,—cherries themselves, the two girls, in their buxom bloom; while Black Jasper, on his ladder, was like a huge black plum. The girls stood at the foot of the tree, and every riper, more tempting bunch than another, Milly confiscated for the best-behaved children in Mr. Hoadley's new school; and if any regard for Mr. Hoadley's gratification and gratitude was included in the gift, Grand'mère would not have held that its merit was therefore impaired. Dolly contented herself with a heap of rose leaves, and a sheaf of lavender to add to Madam's stores.

Yolande had not spirit or strength even

for such light employments, and had crept away to the mossy alcove in the wall, where, leaning back against the dank, hoary stones, she looked as fair and pale as the chaste glimmer of the jasmine stars amid the gloom of their setting of leaves, while her once busy hands, crossed listlessly in her lap, showed as shady in their slenderness, as if they were bathed in moonshine.

Caleb Gage did not join Yolande to chide her—to remind her that there was still work in the world for her to do—to call her to account for questioning the decrees of God, and resisting His will. He did not understand in this sense “a time to mourn” with Yolande, when she was stricken in the tenderest affections which had grown with her growth. Besides, Mr. Hoadley took this mission on himself, and although Yolande invariably recognised his excellent intentions, and would grant to him at the end of his lectures, “Yes, I am *égoïste*, or my heart would not ache so; but it is my heart and my sorrow, and I cannot make them other than they are. You—

you were Grand'mère's friend—that contains all; you are good to speak thus to me, and I am here to listen."

But it did not seem that Yolande was much benefited in other respects by Mr. Hoadley's eagerness in undertaking to enter into every heart's bitterness, and to reconcile the whole world in tribulation to the extent of its deprivations.

Caleb Gage was not impatient of Yolande's grief; he did not wish to sap the tender fidelity in friendship of the woman he cared for by seeking to put it away from her. By his own experience he would have judged *that* the most dishonouring to God and to her of all the modes which even good people have invented of dealing with sorrow. "Sorrow not without hope"—that he could say; and Yolande did not sorrow without hope, in the dreary vast void of unbelief, or the ghostly death-in-life of despair. Neither did she refuse to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth to Him good!" Only she could not see why He did it, and the deed, in its mystery of righteousness and

mercy, was none the less a deed of anguish. And she did sorrow. Grand'mère had been brother and sister, as well as old mother to her, and without her sorrow she would have been faithless alike to Grand'mère and herself. And Grand'mère was violently taken from her by that stroke with which, at its gentlest, no repetition makes us familiar; which is still as awful a miracle as when it silenced the tongue, stiffened the limbs, and reft the soul from Abel, carrying it into that unseen, unheard, unfelt world, before the unfathomableness of which, had not the Son of Man returned from it, and had not the dim foreshadowing of his return stretched through all the ages before Him, as the narrative of His return, written in letters of heavenly fire, illuminates the darkness after Him—hearts must have hardened into stone, or grovelled in brutality.

Caleb wanted to share Yolande's sorrow, to cherish it, train it, lift it to endure, for time and eternity, a brighter and holier joy. He was welcome to sit with her and talk to her of Grand'mère—more welcome and

more prized than, in her present state, she could comprehend; and she only marked the fact by being a little less outwardly grateful to him than to others, a little less careful of trespassing on his kindness.

“This time last year Grand’mère and me, we did such a thing together, Monsieur,”—Yolande was making her moan—“and it is not only that we shall never do the same thing again, but that all the occasions on which we did it before seem somehow shivered in their reality, and steeped in tears, so that I cannot sometimes quite believe that such events happened at all—that I did not dream them, as I dream of Grand’mère now, and wake and find her image a dream; or that she and I could ever have been joyous and full of confidence together, when we knew always that one day we must part, and might walk asunder in different worlds, for long years. It is not only the future which is taken from me, but the past also. Monsieur, I feel myself not only a shattered wreck of what I was, but a phantom among other phantoms, whose blindness is such that we

do not know till the crash comes, and the inconceivable change has passed over our circle, that we are no more than so many phantoms."

"There was one who dwelt amongst us," Caleb told the sorrow-laden girl, "who went and came again on that journey from which none of us comes back, and His command was to touch Him, and feel that He had flesh and bones as we have. He was not a phantom first or last; and neither are we spectres, whether we exist body and spirit, or in the spirit alone. It is all reality there as well as here. Now, you doubt the reality of the latter, because you can no longer demonstrate to yourself the reality of the former. If you reasoned by an inverse and truer process, what you have known should prove to you what you do not know. But, Mademoiselle Yolande, while you grieve for Grand'mère, with whom you had such communion as I think I can understand, do you never think what it would have been had you lived like a stranger to her?—had you shown her no regard, and had no happiness in which she

had borne a part, till you discovered too late what you two might have been to each other?"

"Oh! you do not know!" cried Yolande brokenly, thinking of the day when Grand'mère had said to her, "Even you and I, *petite*, when we shall be separated, we shall see chambers in each other's hearts which we did not enter, doors which we did not open, vows which we did not pay."

"But I do know," Caleb Gage interrupted her hastily; "I misunderstood, undervalued Grand'mère. You must have known this, and condemned me for it, Yolande."

Yolande looked at him and shook her head. "How could I, when she did not condemn you? *Sans doute!* it was quite another thing from your misunderstanding and undervaluing me; but still Grand'mère and I we were one, and she did not condemn you. But what a loss you had!"

"Ay, what a loss! But for my father, I could not have formed a notion of my mother, and your Grand'mère might have been mine; and see, I have lost her also!"

"I will tell you about her, Monsieur

Caleb," volunteered Yolande impulsively.

"Will you? That will be indeed like Grand'mère's child."

"Yes, Grand'mère would have made it all up to you, *mille fois*. She would have rejoiced to render you rich with her best blessing, which, when you knew no better, for a little moment you despised—and she is gone, like the good Squire your father!"

"Like my father," repeated Caleb, "who thought to make you his daughter, and died smiling in the thought."

"And he left you alone with what remains of his good people at the Mall," Yolande interposed, restlessly, but wistfully.

"Because you will not come to me, Yolande."

"I will come—I will come!" yielded Yolande suddenly, weeping in generous abandonment. "I have been unlike Grand'mère—what she would not have had me to be. I have forgotten you. What could hold me back from you?"

THE END.

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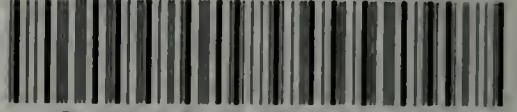
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